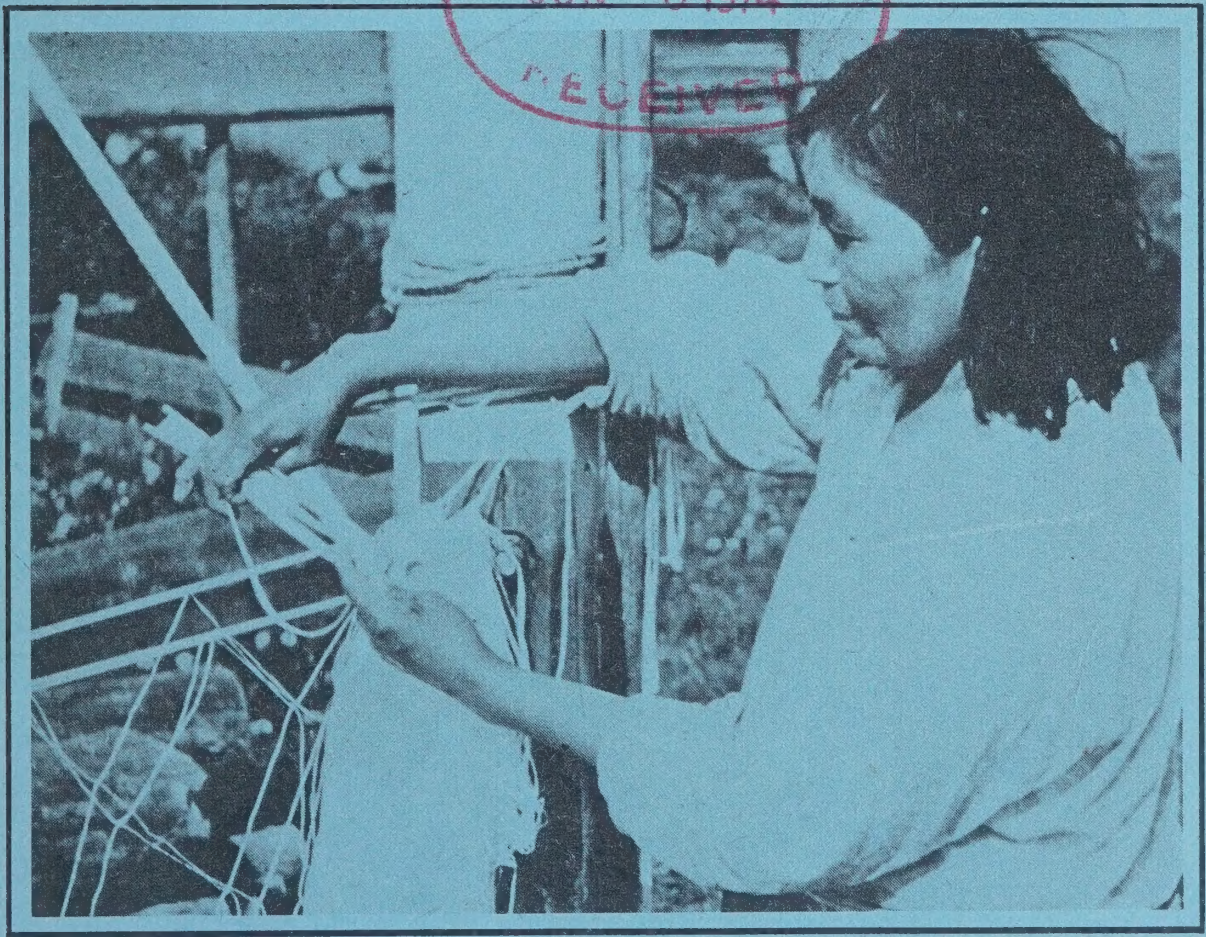


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Cover photo:

**Woman at Bearskin Lake making a
sturgeon gill net with a bone shuttle.
(photo by Dick Boltby)**

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ojibwa fisheries in northwestern ontario

[G-13]

Edward S. Rogers
Department of Ethnology
Royal Ontario Museum

Commercial Fish and Fur Branch
Division of Fish and Wildlife
1972



Ontario

Ministry of
Natural
Resources

General publications

Hon. Leo Bernier, Minister

W.Q. Macnee, Deputy Minister

FOREWORD

In 1971, a study was initiated by the Ontario Dept. of Lands & Forests* to determine the economic viability of the commercial fishery on the inland lakes of Northwestern Ontario. The objective was to examine the potential of the industry, the social and economic factors involved and the alternatives for the future.

As a part of the overall feasibility study, this publication reports on the social significance of the commercial fishery to the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario.

This study was made possible through the financial support of the Federal and Provincial Governments under the terms of the 1970-75 Rural Development Agreement.

We sincerely appreciate the co-operation and assistance of the provincial organization of A.R.D.A. in the Ontario Dept. of Agriculture and Food. In addition, a special acknowledgement is due to, Dr. E. S. Rogers and the staff at the Royal Ontario Museum who gave so willingly of their time and effort in the preparation of this report.

Commercial Fish & Fur Branch
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

*The Ontario Dept. of Lands & Forests was incorporated into the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on April 1, 1972.



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I would also like to thank Miss Beryl Reynolds and Miss Maria Fuchenko who diligently laboured over the many typings of the report.

Finally, but certainly not last in my mind, are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Greene of Shoal Lake, Mr. Roy McDonald of Whitedog and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Bruyere of Couchiching. They gave freely of their time, commented frankly, and fully and with a sincere warmth. Without their help this report could not have been prepared. I shall be eternally grateful.

Apologies must be made to Drs. Mary Black, Garth Taylor and Charles Bishop whose reports I have plagiarized.

It is hoped that the comments and views expressed in this report accurately reflect the situation. If not it certainly is not the fault of those who so kindly gave of their time to inform me. Instead it is my own inability to grasp the true meaning of the many conversations that is responsible.

Edward S. Rogers

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INTRODUCTION

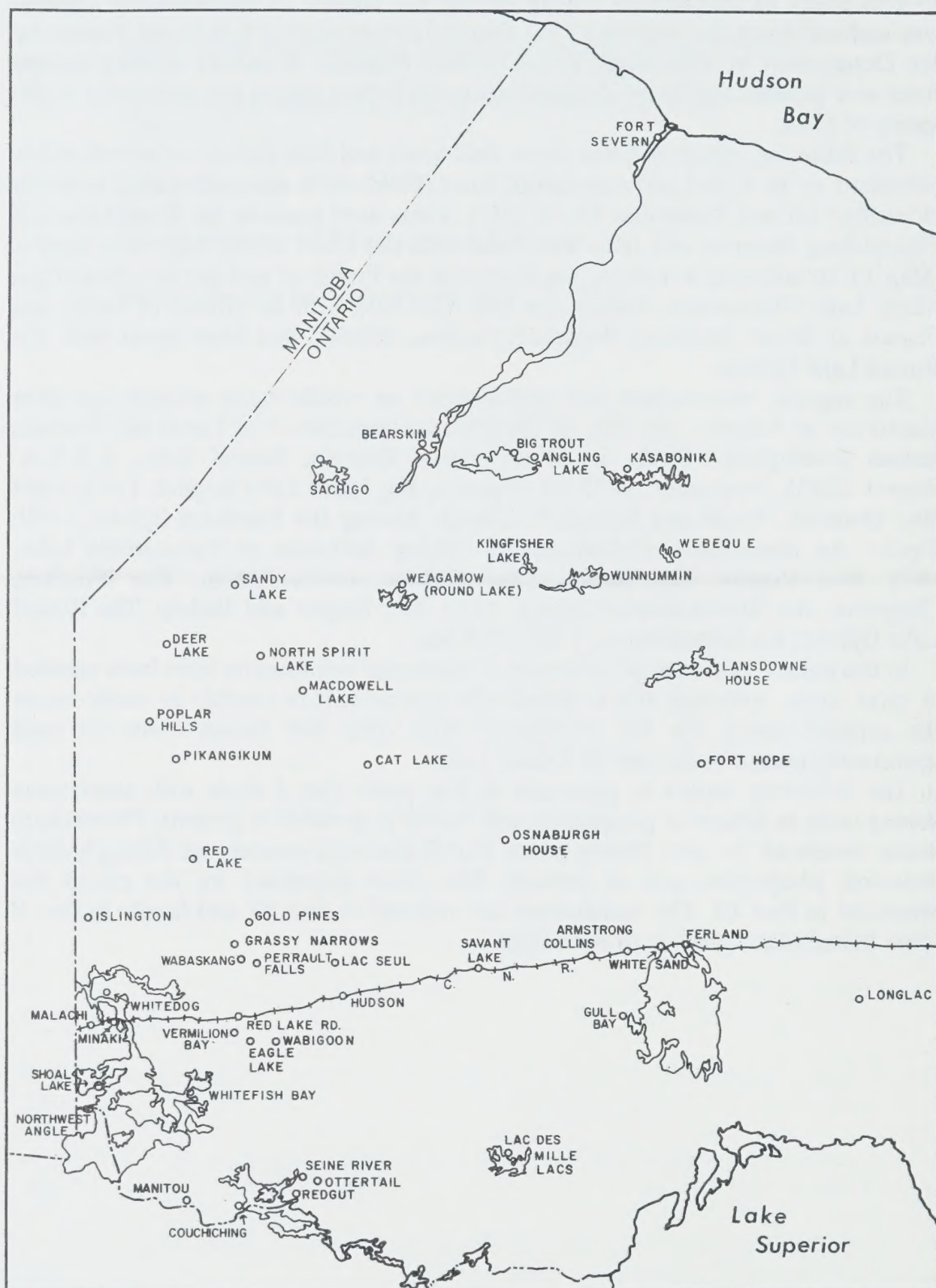
This study of commercial fishing among the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario was undertaken at the request of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests by the Department of Ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum. A certain urgency existed since new policies had to be defined before the fishing season got under way in the spring of 1972.

The following report is based upon field work and data already collected, either published or in report and manuscript form. Field work was undertaken between November 1st and November 8th of 1971. Visits were made to the Shoal Lake and Couchiching Reserves and talks were held with the Chief of the Whitedog Reserve (Map 1). In addition, a meeting was held with the President and one member of the Rainy Lake Fishermen's Association and talks held with an official of Lands and Forests at Sioux Lookout. Previously, a year, 1958-9, had been spent with the Round Lake Ojibwa.

The reports, manuscripts and publications on which much reliance has been placed are as follows: the files of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, **Indian Development Study in Northwestern Ontario, Round Lake**, A.R.D.A. Project 25075, November, 1970 Ms.; Sametz, **Big Trout Lake Report**, I.G-3, 1964 Ms.; Dunning, **Social and Economic Change Among the Northern Ojibwa**, 1959; Taylor, **An Assessment of Commercial Fishing Activities at Wunnummin Lake**, 1971 Ms.; Rogers, **The Round Lake Ojibwa**, 1962; Bishop, **The Northern Chippewa: An Ethnohistorical Study**, 1969 Ms.; Rogers and Bishop, **The Round Lake Ojibwa: An Ethnohistory**, 1780-1965 Ms.

In this report, citations as to sources of particular information have been omitted in most cases. Although this is technically incorrect, it is possible to easily locate the original source for the statements since only one source exists for each community except in the case of Round Lake.

The following report is presented in five parts. Part I deals with subsistence fishing both in historical perspective and insofar as possible at present. Present here means events of the past twenty years. Part II discusses commercial fishing both in historical perspective and at present. The views expressed by the people are presented in Part III. The conclusions are outlined in Part IV and finally in Part V some thoughts are given as to the future.



Map 1
SETTLEMENTS
 NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
 (PRIMARILY NATIVE)
 1970-71

**TABLE 1. SETTLEMENTS OF NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
(PRIMARILY NATIVE) 1968-71**

Community	Population
Angling Lake	60
Armstrong	300
Bearskin	270
Big Trout Lake	500
Cat Lake	157
Collins	60
Couchiching	360
Deer Lake	250
Eagle Lake	140
Ear Falls	1,500
Ferland	50
Fort Hope	700
Fort Severn	115
Grassy Narrows	375
Gull Bay	310
Hudson	50
Islington	497
Kasabanica	230
King Fisher Lake	125
Lac De Mille Lacs	0
Lac Seul	435
Lansdowne House	200
Longlac No. 58	374
Longlac No. 77	56
Malachi	53
Manitou	348
McDowell Lake	30
Minaki	183
North Spirit Lake	109
North West Angle	103
Osnaburgh House	300
Otter Tail	0
Pickle Lake	75
Pikangikum	500
Polar Hills	140
Redgut	60
Red Lake Road	50
Perrault Falls	50
Round Lake	235
Sachigo	140
Sandy Lake	700
Savant Lake	160
Seine River	243
Shoal Lake	325
Slate Falls	80
Vermilion Bay	200
Wabaskang	68
Wabigoon	125
Webique	230
Whitedog - Islington	570
Whitefish Bay	411
White Sand	219
Wunnummin	250

SYNOPTIC GUIDE

Subsistence Ojibwa Fisheries: Northwestern Ontario

- (1) Total Ojibwa population is estimated to be 8,000.
- (2) Use of fish by the Ojibwa for food has decreased in recent years and this trend will probably continue into the future - estimated annual consumption is 1,000,000 pounds.
- (3) Minimal use is made of fish for dog food and trap bait.

Commercial

- (1) Commercial fishing is a new economic activity which started in the 1930's in the north.
- (2) Development has been rapid since the late 1950's.
- (3) It reached a plateau in the late 1960's and in some areas has begun to decline.
- (4) It is a major form of employment for 50 to 100 individuals and casual employment for perhaps 700 individuals.
- (5) Income for the few is estimated to range between \$2,000.00 and \$5,000.00 - for the many, only a few hundred dollars annually.
- (6) Maximum capital investment is about \$2,000.00 per fisherman - operating costs range from several hundred to a thousand dollars annually.
- (7) Mostly it is the older people who are the primary fishermen - the youth are not involved to any extent.
- (8) Commercial fishing appears to be an economic activity that is slowly becoming an activity of the past.
- (9) For those who do fish it is a way of life that they would hate to lose.
- (10) However, they would not necessarily wish to leave their home communities to live in a location of good fishing - perhaps temporarily but not permanently.
- (11) There is the feeling that the government is trying to eliminate commercial fishing by various means in favour of the tourist trade - this is being done to get more money.
- (12) It is felt that the government does not truly discuss these matters with the people and take seriously what the Ojibwa have to say.
- (13) They feel they should have a stronger voice in matters affecting them.
- (14) They wish to have the fisheries kept going wherever possible - if necessary with subsidy.
- (15) They are tolerant, however, and feel that if commercial fishing must be closed, for example because of mercury, then some provisions must be made for the future.
- (16) They do not believe welfare is the answer nor would compensation based on the economic investment and return from commercial fishing be of much assistance.
- (17) Re-training programs should be made available to assist those deprived of fishing.
- (18) Industries should be established on the reserves to improve economic conditions.

Views of the Situation

- (1) Commercial Fishing as an area of concern must be seen in the wide context of the total socio-economic and cultural situation of the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario.
- (2) Specifically, commercial fishing should not be ended suddenly - if it must be ended for political, economic or health reasons, this must be done slowly which might well fit the current trend.
- (3) Alternate opportunities must be made available - alternatives that they recognize as meaningful within their frames of reference which are not always those of the Euro-Canadian.
- (4) Finally, in the wider context, cultural programs of their own must be supported. These will provide the sense of identity on which to base sound economic programs which, if meaningful, will generate the appropriate socio-political structures to deal with the local situations and the wider society.

PART I SUBSISTENCE FISHING

INTRODUCTION

Subsistence fishing has always been of at least limited importance to the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario. During the last century, fish were a basic element in the diet. Prior to that time fish formed a supplementary food. During the present century, there has been a decreasing utilization of fish for food. The following section details first what is known of the history of subsistence fishing and second the situation as it has been recorded for the last two decades. In both instances, unfortunately, the data are meager.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (PRE-1830-1950):

Big Game Pre-1830: The Northern Ojibwa, prior to about 1830, were big game hunters. Caribou, moose and beaver usually supplied them with an abundance of food. Although fishing was of limited importance, it was not totally neglected. Furthermore, the traders, on occasion, supplied fish to Indians who were short of food.

To exploit the natural resources, the Indians in the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries generally adhered to a specific round of annual activities. During parts of the cycle, fishing was undertaken.

In early summer, the Ojibwa often assembled at trading posts to await the arrival of the brigades which brought the new supply of trade goods for the coming year. After obtaining these, the people moved to a lake where fishing was productive. Here the women usually set the nets and preserved any fish taken, by smoking and drying the flesh over a slow fire. When big game was difficult to obtain, the men sometimes assisted the women, although their pride must have been hurt since they considered themselves big game hunters. No more fishing might be undertaken again until late winter when the women and children caught fish to supplement the food derived from big game. During May, the Osnaburgh House Indians assembled at nearby sturgeon fisheries on the Albany River. Other Indian groups may have done likewise.

The Indians had only limited equipment with which to secure fish. Sturgeon were taken with spears. For other species, the Indians used gill nets, the latter being obtained from the traders. In some instances, the traders encouraged the Indians to fish with hook and line through the ice.

Hare and Fish 1830-1950: By the late 1820's, moose had disappeared completely from northern Ontario and caribou had grown so scarce that they provided only a very minor part of the diet of the Northern Ojibwa. Big game did not begin to return until the end of the nineteenth century. Moose and caribou were then again sought for food.

Throughout most of the 19th century, following the reduction in big game, fish and hare provided the basis of subsistence. Hare were of greatest importance when abundant. When hare were scarce, the Indians relied heavily upon fish taken in winter with hook and line through the ice of the larger lakes and with nets when available. By the middle of the 19th century, nets had become a regular trade item at Osnaburgh House. The Indians also made their own nets from twine supplied by the traders. During the warmer months of the year, fish were the principal food source. In addition to nets and hooks, the Indians employed weirs in the rapids of rivers during the spring and fall. Spears were also employed.

Around 1900 in the southern part of the area, moose began to return and caribou to increase in numbers. Farther north, moose arrived later. As this occurred, big game became more important in the diet and less reliance had to be

placed upon fish and hare. Nevertheless, the Northern Ojibwa did not cease to depend upon these latter two sources of food.

The Round Lake Ojibwa provide a specific example of the role that fishing played in the economy during this period. Fishing supplied them with a substantial amount of food, especially during the summer and fall. Fish were taken with a variety of equipment - gill nets, traps (or weirs), hooks and spears.

Since gill nets were scarce during the last century – some of the inhabitants had none – the Round Lake Ojibwa used hooks. The type of aboriginal hook is unknown but by this period, hooks were being made by the men from the handles of pails obtained in trade. Later they obtained manufactured hooks from the traders.

With hooks, the Round Lake Ojibwa men, not women, took northern pike, pickerel*, yellow perch, burbot or ling and lake trout. Hooks might be used in winter but most often during the spring. If possible, a series of hooks were set between two islands. Set lines were also placed in the narrows of lakes at the outlets of lakes, off points of land or near rocky islands. In the spring, set lines for trout were placed at holes in the ice and left overnight. The hook, baited with fish, was raised about four inches above the bed of the lake or river. Burbot were only secured during the night. To prepare the holes, the fishermen used an iron-tipped ice chisel. The blade was made from whatever pieces of metal were readily available. Birch was considered best for the handle but black spruce was occasionally used. A knob at the proximal end prevented the operator's hand from slipping. Sometimes a short fish pole with hook and line was used to jig for fish through the ice.

Gill nets were a rare item in former days and more likely an innovation due to European contacts. It is not known when they first became common. They were occasionally received in trade or as gifts during the 18th and 19th centuries but do not seem to have been made by the Indians. Nets, it was said, were at first made of a large size twine but in later years a smaller variety was used. Sturgeon were caught in gill nets made of No. 5 twine. Nets for other species were made of No. 12 twine. Before traders supplied twine, informants contended they had nothing with which to make gill nets. Women made the nets using a shuttle and gauge. The former was made of white birch and the latter of black spruce. Both were made by the men and occasionally by the women.

In summer, but not in winter (some informants contradicted this), willow bark string was used to secure the floats and sinkers to the nets and to secure the net to a stake or stone placed at either end of the net to hold it taut. The net, due to the weight of the sinkers, was set on the lake bottom. Two types of floats were used, one for summer and the other for winter. They were made of black spruce or sometimes of white spruce. Floats were dried thoroughly once a month during the winter.

When tending the net in winter, some fishermen left a shelf of ice under the water to one side of the hole from which the net was examined. As the net was retrieved, it was placed on the shelf to keep it from freezing.

In winter, the Round Lake Ojibwa sometimes found many fish trapped by the ice near the shore of a lake. (Apparently the ice occasionally freezes in such a way as to confine a number of fish in a restricted area). When this occurred, the finder moved his family to the spot. A hole was cut in the ice and the fish removed with a metal hook attached to the end of a pole four to five feet long. Suckers were the usual fish taken.

Fish traps or weirs, it is suggested, were the usual gear used before nets were introduced and became common. Nevertheless, they may not have been employed
*also known as walleye

very often during the previous period of big game hunting. In fact, Richardson stated that fish traps were not used east of the Rockies, whereas nets were (Richardson 1852:230).

During the fall and early winter, fish traps were built by the men, generally two men working together. The top of the trap was covered with small sticks over which black spruce boughs were placed. This prevented the fish from drying out when the sun shone and kept ravens from getting the fish. Fish traps could not be used all winter because they often became frozen over and were then no longer operative. Furthermore, fish were not migrating to any extent at this time of the year and therefore far fewer, if any, could be taken. Such traps were tended by the men or sometimes the women.

For sturgeon, a spear might be used. It consisted of a pole 10 to 12 feet long of white birch or larch with two iron prongs attached to the distal end. Each prong was barbed. The spear was made and used by the men.

TODAY (1950-1970):

Introduction: By the mid-1900's subsistence fishing, although still an important activity of the Northern Ojibwa, had decreased in importance from former days. As the monetary economy increases and more store foods become available, it is expected that fish in the diet will continue to decrease. A limited amount of quantitative data exist regarding the role of subsistence fishing in several Ojibwa communities during this period. Unfortunately, precise quantitative data are lacking but some estimates have been made.

Osnaburgh House (1965): At Osnaburgh House, fish were a basic item in the diet, especially during the summer and early fall. During the summer, the Indians took large quantities of fish when living at the fish camps. Although the bulk of the fish were sold commercially many were eaten directly or were preserved by smoking for later use. In the early fall when the whitefish began to spawn, the people caught large numbers and preserved them for winter use.

Winter fishing for food has declined in importance since the new village (New Osnaburgh House) was established because good fishing grounds are not situated nearby. Furthermore, fewer families fish commercially during the winter than in summer. Hence fish as an important element in the diet is restricted to those who fish commercially in winter and to those who live more or less permanently at the fish camps on Lake St. Joseph.

The most important fish caught included pickerel, whitefish, northern pike, suckers and sturgeon. Most of the fish were taken in gill nets set in open water or through the ice. The nets were obtained from the stores, commercial fishermen or made by the women. The nets varied in length from about 25 to 100 yards.

Pikangikum (1955): At Pikangikum, fishing has been one of the most reliable sources of food both in terms of the relative ease of the operation and in terms of the length of time throughout the year when the supply of fish is available. Fishing by means of gill nets was continually possible except during spring break-up and fall freeze-up. In 1955, there were 15 gill nets in the settlement of Pikangikum which had a population of 85. The monthly catch ranged from 50 to 200 edible fish. In winter, the supply was augmented by the children fishing through the ice with hook and line for pike. Other species were taken but by 1955 the Indians rarely caught sturgeon any more.

Round Lake (1958-9): Among the Round Lake Ojibwa, fishing had been an important activity and basic to the Indians' way of life for many decades. Fish provided a major source of food. Many Round Lake Ojibwa in 1958-9 talked

fondly of fishing in contrast to hunting and trapping and gave every appearance of genuinely enjoying this work. (During 1968-70, the pattern of subsistence fishing remained much the same except that there was not quite the dependence placed on fish for food that there had been ten years earlier).

Subsistence fishing occurred throughout the year, except during freeze-up. Prior to this time of year, an attempt was made to secure sufficient fish for food and trap bait to last throughout the period of freeze-up. For example on October 29th, 1958, there were well over 2,000 fish hanging on racks in various parts of the village, mostly whitefish and a few pike.

Subsistence fishing was generally a family affair: a man and his young son did the work, at times aided by the man's wife. Occasionally she tended the nets, especially during the winter. No matter what time of the year it was, the nets, as a rule, were examined in the morning, one of the first tasks of the day.

During the fall, one net, or sometimes two were set and examined every day or two by each household. It was the same whether the family was living in the village or in the bush. Even though fishing was emphasized at this time of the year, fewer nets were used than was often the case at other times of the year since the whitefish were spawning and large numbers could easily be taken. A single net might produce from 50 to 150 fish daily. At temporary camps, established by those people moving to their winter camps, gill nets were examined two or three times each day. During the winter, generally two nets were set to secure as many fish as possible since fishing was relatively unproductive. An attempt was made to examine the nets every two days but when stormy weather prevailed for any length of time this was not possible. For a few weeks after break-up, only one net was set since the fish were moving around freely and the pickerel were spawning. Now the people again made large catches. The nets were examined daily. As a rule, only one net was used during the summer. The fisherman examined it every day or two.

Of all fish taken for whatever reason, approximately 95% were captured in gill nets. The remainder were shot or taken in fish traps. Fishing with hooks was discontinued about 1950 and spears, bows and arrows and gaffs sometime before that date. Only one trap was known to have been built and used during the fall of 1958.

The Round Lake Ojibwa consumed large quantities of fish besides feeding fish to their dogs and using fish for trap bait. It is estimated that in the late 1950's the people (a resident population of 229) annually caught and used between 25,000 and 50,000 pounds of fish. The larger figure is probably the more accurate. This estimate is based on figures supplied by 27 married men together with direct observation. Fish accounted for approximately one-quarter of the total food consumed. This would indicate that approximately one-half a pound of fish was eaten daily by each person.

The people ate sturgeon, lake trout, lake whitefish, suckers (both species), northern pike, burbot, perch and pickerel. The principal food fish consisted of lake whitefish, pickerel and burbot (i.e. the liver). Others such as northern pike and suckers were used for trap bait and dog food. Sturgeon and lake trout were rarely caught.

Big Trout Lake (1961-2): At Big Trout Lake, fish have always been a major staple in the diet of the people and still were during the summers of the early 1960's. At this time fishing for domestic consumption was, for the most part, carried out by the women, although the men might take part. Some fish for domestic consumption were brought home by those men employed during the summer in the commercial fishery. The people took sturgeon, whitefish, trout and pickerel for food.

The estimated fish consumption at Big Trout Lake in the early 1960's is

conservatively placed in the vicinity of 205,000 pounds per annum, or 400 pounds per person per annum. This represents approximately one pound of fish eaten daily by each person.

Shoal Lake (1971): Today little effort appears to be spent by the Shoal Lake Ojibwa in purely subsistence fishing. Whatever fish are consumed locally, and this does not appear to be a large volume, are taken directly from the commercial fishing operation. One gets the impression that only a limited reliance is placed on fish these days. As one individual said when asked: "Whenever we feel like it we have fish to eat for supper or dinner. Most of it we sell." Another person stated that: "Not too much fish was eaten." One family who fished commercially intensively brought and gave fish, on occasion, to four or five other families. But as one of the family members said: "I don't think they depend on the fish." The fish people like to eat most are pickerel but whitefish are a close second.

Few dogs are in evidence at Shoal Lake and accordingly little use would be made of fish to feed them. Furthermore, the limited amount of trapping that is done here would not necessitate much fish for trap bait.

Whitedog (1971): Today, fish are used for food but the people do not eat fish every day. Some families have it once a week while other have it only once or twice a month.

Couchiching (1971): Pickerel and northern pike are eaten at home. It is said that not too much fish is eaten. In the past, one could take enough fish in the spring with a 4 inch mesh net to last one family for a year. At that time they used 3-1/2 inch mesh nets rarely 4 inch mesh. But now, with the larger mesh size required, an individual cannot get enough to last for the summer and one expends more gas than it's worth. With a 4-1/4 or 4-1/2 inch mesh net one cannot even catch enough fish to eat at spawning time. At the same time, one gets a lot of suckers and other coarse fish. It is possible to obtain more fish with a hook and line than it is with the larger nets. Today a few individuals can still make gill nets. June is considered the poorest month for fishing.

SUMMARY:

The Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario have taken fish for three purposes aside from commercial sale - food for themselves, trap bait and dog food. Although dogs in the past were important for winter transportation, the average number kept by each household of the Round Lake Ojibwa was in the neighbourhood of two. Therefore, probably no more than 300 pounds of fish were used annually by each household as dog food. A comparable situation would have existed at other settlements. With the introduction of motor toboggans, the number of dogs has decreased greatly everywhere and proportionately the need for fish to feed them.

It does not appear that a large quantity of fish was needed for trap bait at any time. Since trapping has decreased in importance, the use of fish as trap bait has decreased accordingly. In both cases, the species of fish used for dog food and trap bait were not, as a rule, those considered as food for the people themselves. Suckers appear to have been the major species used.

Although quantitative data are limited, it appears that there has been a general decline in the utilization of fish by the Ojibwa for food. Unfortunately, not even crude quantitative data exist for the time prior to the late 1950's. However, on the basis of statements made by traders and others, it appears that since 1830 fish have been a staple in the diet of the people until recently. In addition, hare were an important source of food. It can therefore be crudely estimated that the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario consumed perhaps as much as 2 pounds of fish per person per day throughout the year. With the return of big game towards the end of the

last century, the quantity of fish utilized, no doubt, has decreased.

Some data do exist for the period after 1950 for the more northern settlements. Figures from Round Lake for the late 1950's give a crude estimate of one-half a pound of fish consumed per person per day annually. In the early 1960's at Big Trout Lake estimates suggest that approximately one pound of fish per person per day was consumed annually. No other quantitative data have been located to augment this data. Indications are that, at the present (1970-71), the use of fish by the Ojibwa for food has decreased since the late 1950's and early 1960's. Government subsidies have increased and the local stores have been able to increase their stocks of food due to the greater facility of the transportation system to reach these areas. These two factors have freed the Ojibwa from a heavy dependence on country game. It is perhaps safe to say that no more than one-half a pound of fish per person is consumed daily. In some communities it is probably a great deal less and in others which are more remote there is no doubt that somewhat more reliance is placed upon fish for food.

Those Indians living in the southern part of the area do not appear to utilize fish to any great extent at the present time. This survey suggests that their pattern of fish consumption is not greatly different from that of our own. Consumption will, of course, vary from family to family and throughout the year.

PART II COMMERCIAL FISHING

INTRODUCTION:

Although commercial fishing as understood today is a recent development, some of the Indians of Northwestern Ontario have been involved in fishing for over a hundred years to supply the needs of the traders. Accordingly, they have not been unaware of the commercial nature of fishing in contrast to subsistence fishing.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (PRE-1950):

Osnaburgh House: Fishing for the Hudson's Bay Company is an activity which occupied several Indians each year from the 1840's until the 1930's. The Indians worked for the Hudson's Bay Company at the fall fisheries on Lake St. Joseph. These fishing stations provided food for the traders at the post, visiting Indians and the dog teams. Therefore, the introduction of commercial fishing on Lake St. Joseph during the 1930's fitted into a well-established summer economic pattern that had been initiated among the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company to supply the latter with fish.

Pikangikum: At Pikangikum occasional attempts had been made prior to 1950 to operate a commercial fishing licence on the part of the band. During the 1930's and 1940's, about four or five men were engaged part time in commercial fishing.

Round Lake: Commercial fishing, in contrast to trapping, was a late development among the Round Lake Ojibwa. Not until the 1930's were efforts made to exploit commercially the fisheries resources. This economic activity started in a small way, but over the years it has increased in importance in the lives of the Indians.

Wunnummin Lake: Commercial fishing at Wunnummin Lake started around 1934, when an airline from Nakina and/or Armstrong began to buy sturgeon at the summer fishing camps of the Indians. The first attempts to establish fisheries for the less valuable species, namely pickerel and whitefish, were made around 1948. Two different airlines, one from Sioux Lookout and one from Pickle Lake, hired local Indians to supervise the fisheries and to construct ice houses and storage sheds.

TODAY (1950-1970):

Osnaburgh House: In 1965, one of the most important activities of the Osnaburgh House Indians was commercial fishing. It was the most popular and adaptive economic activity. It not only allowed the people to camp in the bush during the summer in family and co-residential units, but provided them with a source of income without interfering with the formal education of their children. Even those Indians who did not take commercial fishing seriously enjoyed escaping from the village to the fish camps. Also, food costs dropped during the summer months, as many of the fish caught in the nets were consumed at home. Fish were eaten at one meal almost every day. Commercial fishing at Osnaburgh House has since 1960 replaced trapping as the chief source of earned income.

Most commercial fishing was done during the summer, although some men fished through the ice during February and March. Fishing began about the first of June and continued until mid-October when the trapping season opened. Most fishing, however, was done during July and August and the fish camps were then at their largest.

On Lake St. Joseph where most fishing occurred there were three main camps used each summer by the same families. The camps from east to west have been designated respectively: Smooth Rock, Jackfish Narrows and Big Narrows.

Seasonally during the 1960's, the prices paid for fish fluctuated slightly. Pickerel

were the most valuable bringing 30 cents per pound, whitefish 10 cents per pound and pike 4 cents per pound. The prices have doubled in the past decade. Although the total poundage has increased, the government has set management quotas and limited the yardage of nets on each lake.

In early June the men and their families moved their equipment to the camps. Basic equipment included food, nets, tents, and gasoline for outboard motors. Early in the season, a fish buyer frequently advanced the Indians credit to cover initial expenses. The buyer made three trips a week to the fish camps to collect the boxes of fish and to take the families their supplies. On the trip down, empty wooden boxes made by the Indians at Doghole Bay (the site of the buyers warehouse) and other supplies were left at each camp. On the return trip, the fish, packed in crushed ice, were loaded on the boat by the fishermen. Each box was marked with the name of the fisherman who caught and packed the fish so that an accurate record of individual earnings could be kept. Once back at Doghole Bay, the boxes were unloaded by several Indians and immediately taken to the warehouse where the fish were checked for spoilage and repacked according to species. An Indian bookkeeper kept individual records of the weights and species of the fish obtained.

The concept of fishing territories seemed to be developing at this time although territorial boundaries were only vaguely defined. The Indians of each camp had a number of spots where they habitually set their nets. On one occasion, an Indian complained that the men from another camp were getting too close to the area fished by the Big Narrows men. The men while visiting in the evening often discussed where they intended to set their nets so that no conflicts would occur. Usually men worked in pairs and the nets had to be checked daily. Nets were owned individually, and the catch was the personal property of the owner. This also applied in the case of husband and wife teams of which there were three. It was customary to first set one partner's nets, and then the other's nets. Boats powered with outboard motors were used to reach the fishing grounds. The cost of the gas used was apportioned according to the approximate distance travelled in setting and checking each partner's nets. Usually one partner owned the boat and motor. The number of nets set by the partners varied according to their abilities and to the number owned. Table 2 gives the figures for the number of fishermen at each of the three camps and the number of nets set.

TABLE 2. Nets Set Per Fisherman, Osnaburgh: 1965

Fish Camp	No. of Partners	No. of Men Fishing Alone	Total Nets Set	No. of Nets Per Fisherman
Smooth Rock	2	2	24	4.0
Jackfish Narrows	8	2	85	4.7
Big Narrows	4	2	61	6.1
	14	6	170	5.0

There were other Osnaburgh Indians who fished near the west end of Lake St. Joseph. These people sold their fish to the Slate Falls Trading Company which flew the fish directly to Sioux Lookout. Fewer fish were taken here than at any one of the three main camps and the price paid for the fish was lower due to the higher transportation costs.

Lake St. Joseph was not the only lake in the vicinity where commercial fishing

was conducted during the summer. Fish from a number of smaller lakes were also bought by the buyer at Doghole Bay.

It is of interest to note that the distinction made by the Indians between Lake St. Joseph Indians and village Indians was clearly evident from the location of the families and co-residential units, the time devoted to fishing and the earnings of individual Indians. Table 3 presents the numbers and percentages of fishermen at different income levels during the summer of 1965. For comparative purposes, the figures for Lake St. Joseph Indians and the village Indians have been kept separate.

**TABLE 3. Income Levels in Relation to Time Spent
at Fish Camps, Osnaburgh: 1965.**

	St. Joseph Indians			Village Indians		
	No.	Per Cent	Time in Weeks	No.	Per Cent	Time in Weeks
Under \$199	4	17.4	2.8	21	70.0	1.2
\$200 - \$499	5	21.7	7.5	7	23.3	3.2
\$500 - \$799	4	17.4	12.8			
\$800 - \$1,399	2	8.7	18.0	2*	6.7	9.0
\$1,400 - \$1,999	4	17.4	18.0			
Over \$2,000	4	17.4	17.7			
	23	100.0		30	100.0	

*This figure includes one set of partners (stepson-stepfather) for which only the total earnings were available since they had a joint account.

Although a few village Indians might fish on Lake St. Joseph for short periods, not one Lake St. Joseph Indian fished on any of the other lakes. The earnings of the two groups were directly related to the amount of time spent at the fish camps. Village Indians spent only about two weeks at the fish camps compared to about twelve weeks for Lake St. Joseph Indians. The average income of the former was only \$211.00 compared to \$975.00 for the latter (see Table 4). Also the village Indians appeared to devote less time to fishing in proportion to the total time spent at the camp and they set fewer nets. Most villagers considered their stay at the summer camps to be a holiday although at the same time offering them the opportunity of earning some cash. Estimates of the total income from fishing activities for 1965-66 are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 4. Income in Relation to Time, Osnaburgh: 1965.

	Lake St. Joseph Indians (23)	Village Indians (31)	Totals (54)
Total time in weeks spent at fish camps	279	66	345
Average time per fisherman spent at camps in weeks	12.1	2.1	6.4
Total income	\$22,417.96	\$6,544.67	\$28,962.63
Average income per fisherman	\$ 974.69	\$ 211.12	\$ 536.35

**TABLE 5. Total Income from Fishing Activities,
Osnaburgh: 1965-66.**

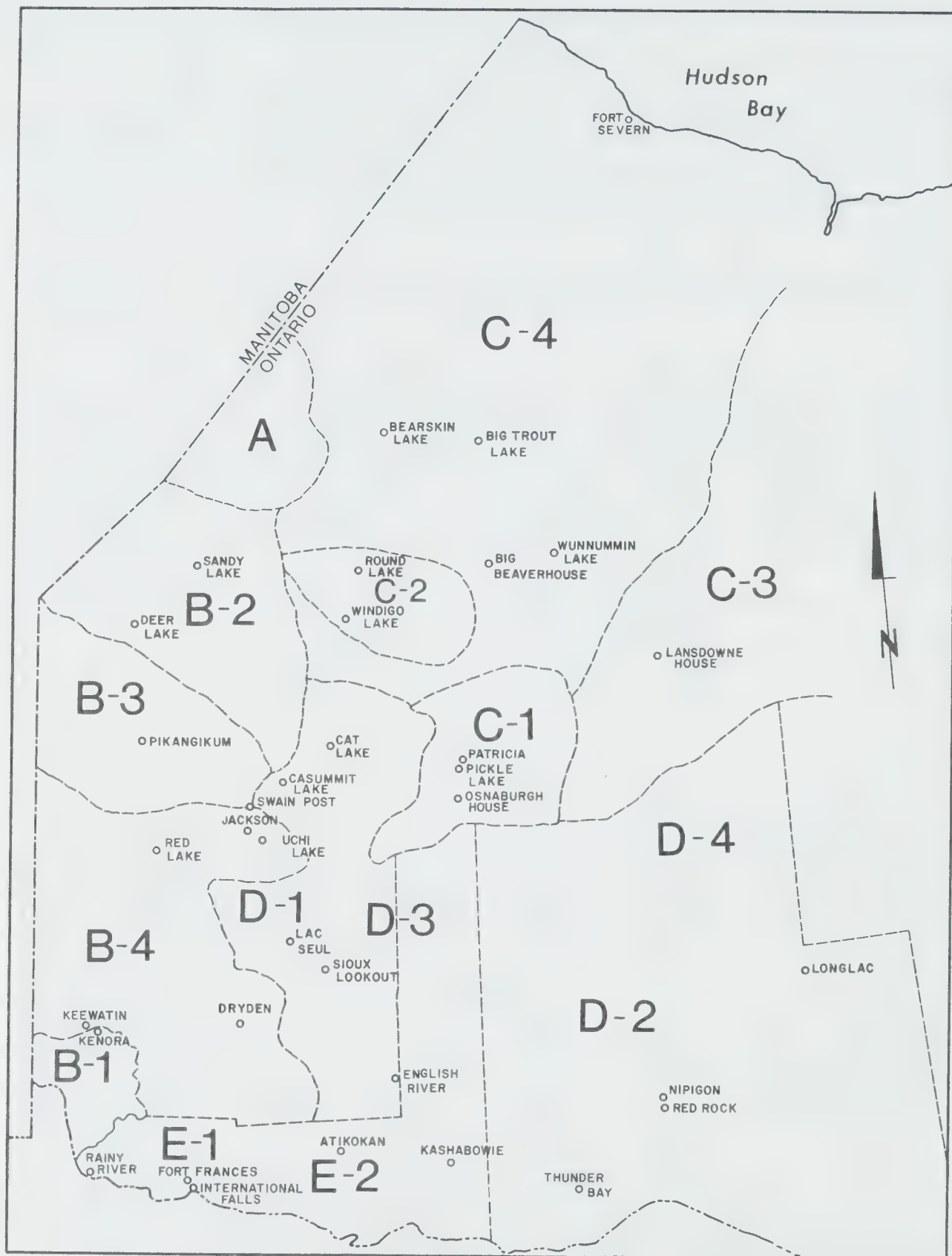
Summer	
Fish sold at Doghole Bay	\$29,000.00
Income from other activities associated with fishing (box making, weighing, packing, bookkeeping)	2,500.00
Fish sold to trading company	3,000.00
Winter	
Income from fish sold at Pickle Lake	2,500.00
Total	<u>\$37,000.00</u>

Table 6 presents the annual production in pounds and income per species for the past few years. This for Flow Area C-1 (Map 2). Within this area 26 lakes were licensed last year and approximately 48 fishermen were reported to have been active. About 40 of these were fishing under the Osnaburgh band licence. Twenty-two lakes have a total annual quota of 212,000 pounds of whitefish and 157,000 pounds of pickerel. The other 4 lakes have no quotas.

**TABLE 6. Annual Production in Pounds and Income by Species,
Osnaburgh, Flow Area C-1: 1966-70.**

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>
	<u>Pounds</u>				
Pike	7,951	17,152	3,561	17,689	31,118
Suckers	6,392	511	12,250	—	—
Whitefish	26,659	21,457	4,692	9,196	62,775
Pickerel	<u>35,158</u>	<u>54,476</u>	<u>17,493</u>	<u>42,106</u>	<u>70,625</u>
	<u>76,160</u>	<u>93,596</u>	<u>37,996</u>	<u>68,991</u>	<u>164,518</u>
	<u>Income</u>				
Pike	\$ 771.	\$ 1,004.	\$ 503.	\$ 862.	\$ 3,243.
Suckers	105.	—	—	—	—
Whitefish	4,593.	2,802.	755.	1,210.	10,326.
Pickerel	<u>11,794.</u>	<u>16,939.</u>	<u>5,005.</u>	<u>6,574.</u>	<u>29,646.</u>
	<u>\$17,263.</u>	<u>\$20,745.</u>	<u>\$ 6,263.</u>	<u>\$ 8,646.</u>	<u>\$43,215.</u>

Pikangikum: From 1952 to 1955 three to four men were engaged in part time commercial fishing on a band licence. In 1955 two or three men fished commercially at the reserve, selling their catch to the company trader, and gaining enough money during the summer to keep their own families in groceries. Pikangikum is located in Flow Area B-3 (Map 2) and most of the commercial fish caught in this area are taken by this band. Fifty-seven men, of whom 90% or about 51 are Indian fishermen, are said to be involved. All lakes but one have a total quota of 120,000 pounds for whitefish and 130,000 pounds for pickerel. Some fish from several lakes have been rejected because of mercury content. Twenty-five lakes are licensed. Table 7 presents the data on production and income from 1966 through 1970.



Map 2
FLOW AREAS
 COMMERCIAL FISHING
 NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
 1970-71

**TABLE 7. Annual Production in Pounds and Income by Species,
Pikangikum, Flow Area B-3: 1966-70**

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>
	<u>Pounds</u>				
Pike	22,429	19,623	45,796	51,874	38,057
Suckers	—	32,077	—	—	—
Whitefish	14,623	11,999	13,023	21,227	29,572
Pickrel	<u>88,912</u>	<u>53,851</u>	<u>75,018</u>	<u>115,713</u>	<u>65,824</u>
	<u>125,964</u>	<u>117,550</u>	<u>133,837</u>	<u>188,814</u>	<u>133,453</u>
	<u>Income</u>				
Pike	\$ 2,418.	\$ 990.	\$ 2,340.	\$ 2,282.	\$ 1,579.
Suckers	—	436.	—	—	—
Whitefish	2,481.	1,252.	2,755.	2,353.	3,039.
Pickrel	<u>39,881.</u>	<u>14,766.</u>	<u>17,569.</u>	<u>32,251.</u>	<u>24,366.</u>
	<u>\$44,780.</u>	<u>\$17,444.</u>	<u>\$22,664</u>	<u>\$36,886.</u>	<u>\$28,984</u>

Big Trout Lake: Commercial fishing at Big Trout Lake in 1961-2 was undertaken with gill nets. These were set from canoes which might be propelled with paddles, although more and more Indians were obtaining their own outboard motors. Usually the fishermen worked in pairs. Each man brought a particular amount of capital to the partnership - a boat, a motor, or a net. Each man determined where he was going to set his nets and both helped in setting each other's nets and later lifting them. But, in spite of the fact that one man might have a much larger catch than the other, he did not share his catch with his partner. Thus, even though one individual might have fewer nets than the other, he worked just as hard as his partner but did not earn as much. This is a pattern that duplicates that followed in trapping or any other activity that involves co-operative labour.

Most commercial fishing was carried out during the summer. There were several reasons for this. One important reason was that fishing was easier in the summer than in the winter. During the latter season, the operation must be carried out under extremely rigorous conditions and involved the time-consuming task of chopping holes through the ice. Nevertheless, commercial fishing has been carried out during the winter at Big Trout Lake but not too extensively. Another important reason for fishing only during the summer was that a limit had been placed upon the catch by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. The limit was small enough that it could be filled in a very short time negating the need to fish during the winter. According to the fisheries supervisor in the area at the time of the study, the limit was about 100,000 pounds.

At Big Trout Lake there was a tendency for the more successful fishermen to take more and more of the fish. In 1961, one-third of the fishermen in Big Trout Lake were catching two-thirds of the fish. Furthermore, the number of fishermen involved in the fisheries at Big Trout Lake, Bearskin and Kasabanica had declined since 1959 (see Table 8).

TABLE 8 . Number of Fishermen, Big Trout Lake: 1959-61.

	<u>1959</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>
Big Trout Lake			
Bearskin	45	48	35
Kasabanica			
Big Trout Lake (only)	32	27	35

Table 9 gives the annual poundage of commercial fish by species taken during the last few years from Flow Area C-4 (Map 2), which includes Big Trout Lake, Bearskin and Wunnummin. In this area during 1970-71, 59 fishermen were reported as active. Of these, 58 were Indians. Quotas of 228,000 pounds for whitefish and 261,000 pounds for pickerel exist on all but four lakes.

TABLE 9. Annual Production in Pounds and Income by Species
Big Trout Lake, Flow Area C-4: 1966-70

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>
	<u>Pounds</u>				
Pike	2,321	262	7,529	1,606	1,427
Suckers	—	106	775	—	—
Whitefish	24,403	29,853	22,376	17,431	44,300
Pickerel	<u>50,509</u>	<u>35,217</u>	<u>58,078</u>	<u>53,606</u>	<u>61,832</u>
	<u>77,233</u>	<u>65,438</u>	<u>88,758</u>	<u>72,643</u>	<u>107,559</u>
	<u>Income</u>				
Pike	\$ 245.	\$ 17.	\$ 412.	\$ 102.	\$ 37.
Suckers	—	—	—	—	—
Whitefish	4,133.	3,836.	1,564.	1,487	3,008.
Pickerel	<u>24,614.</u>	<u>10,873.</u>	<u>17,091.</u>	<u>12,542.</u>	<u>18,932.</u>
	<u>\$28,992.</u>	<u>\$14,726.</u>	<u>\$19,067</u>	<u>\$14,131.</u>	<u>\$21,977.</u>

Round Lake: Commercial fishing at Round Lake has had an interesting history. Initially, private concerns dealt with the Indians. Then in 1950, the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests introduced a licensing system to regulate the total length of gill nets and the number of sturgeon hooks that could be in operation at any one time. Later, quotas were set for those lakes being exploited and fish buyers had to bid for the right to purchase fish, the contract going to the individual who gave the highest price per pound. In 1958, the Indian Affairs Branch began to take an active part in promoting commercial fishing among the Round Lake Ojibwa.

Over the years, five species of fish - lake trout, northern pike, sturgeon, whitefish and pickerel - have been taken for sale. Only whitefish and pickerel have been caught consistently and usually in large quantities. Whitefish, on the basis of overall production, was the principal commercial fish taken (Table 10) although the price was much lower than for pickerel (Table 11).

Two methods, either hooks or gill nets, were used in the capture of fish. All species were taken in gill nets and, in addition, sturgeon were caught with hooks.

**TABLE 10. Annual Poundage by Species of Commercial Fish
Secured in Round Lake Area: 1950-70**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Whitefish</u>	<u>Pickarel</u>	<u>Pike</u>	<u>Sturgeon</u>	<u>Trout</u>
1970	246,000	64,000	18,000	—	—
1969	174,000	51,000	30,000	—	—
1968	173,000	60,000	26,000	—	—
1967	232,000	62,000	17,000	—	—
1966	175,000	102,000	7,000	—	—
1965	244,000	63,000	3,000	300	—
1964	249,000	76,000	17,000	60	—
1963	262,000	57,000	7,000	200	—
1962	251,000	36,000	3,000	200	—
1961	182,000	35,000	15,000	2,000	—
1960	262,000	42,000	12,000	3,000	1,000
1959	117,000	47,000	500	100	4,000
1958	50,000	28,000	—	—	—
1957	12,000	6,000	—	—	—
1956	8,000	9,000	—	—	—
1955	9,000	15,000	—	—	—
1954	25,000	10,000	—	—	—
1953	32,000	36,000	200	3,000	—
1952	6,000	4,000	—	8,000	—
1951	2,000	4,000	300	3,000	—
1950	—	—	—	8,000	—

**TABLE 11. Annual Income by Species of Commercial Fish
Secured in Round Lake Area: 1950-70**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Whitefish</u>	<u>Pickarel</u>	<u>Pike</u>	<u>Sturgeon</u>	<u>Trout</u>
1970	\$59,000.00	\$31,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$ —	—
1969	\$25,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$2,000.00	—	—
1968	\$22,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$2,000.00	—	—
1967	\$19,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$1,000.00	—	—
1966	\$11,000.00	\$34,000.00	\$1,000.00	—	—
1965	\$15,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 200.00	—
1964	\$12,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 40.00	—
1963	\$13,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	—
1962	\$13,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 200.00	—
1961	\$11,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$1,000.00	—
1960	\$10,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 400.00	\$3,000.00	—
1959	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 100.00	—
1958	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	—	—	—
1957	\$ 600.00	\$ 300.00	—	—	—
1956	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	—	—	—
1955	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	—	—	—
1954	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 600.00	—	—	—
1953	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	—	\$1,000.00	—
1952	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 300.00	—	\$5,000.00	—
1951	\$ 200.00	\$ 400.00	—	\$2,000.00	—
1950	—	—	—	\$8,000.00	—

Gill nets were either made of twine by the women using a shuttle and gauge or purchased ready-made. Hooks were purchased. Gill nets had to be periodically removed from the water and dried. For this a “reel” derived from the Euro-Canadians was sometimes used. Generally, however, the nets were merely draped over a line stretched between two trees.

Commercial fishing might be undertaken at practically any time of the year. Field data for 1958-59 show that only during December was no commercial fishing undertaken. Data from the files of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests for the year 1964 indicate that some commercial fishing was carried on from March through October (Table 12). The discrepancy can most likely be accounted for by normal variations that might occur from year to year in the initial development of a commercial fishery. Whatever the case may be, commercial fishing can be engaged in during every month of the year, limited only by fishery regulations, break-up and freeze-up.

The exploitation of the fishery resources was not restricted to any one lake. Rather, different lakes were fished usually at varying times of the year (Table 12). Commercial fishing was undertaken primarily when the trapping of fur bearers was unimportant or not undertaken.

Not all the Round Lake Ojibwa men participated in commercial fishing. Recently between 20 and 30 have been involved. This is drawn from a resident population of between 350 and 400 people. Yet for Flow Area C-2 (Map 2) which includes only the Caribou Lake Band (Round Lake Ojibwa) 163 fishermen are reported. This clearly indicates the difficulty of securing accurate figures. Yet to accurately tabulate those who did fish during the course of any one year is difficult. This was not steady employment and fishermen came and went on quick notice. Therefore, the figures represent the total number involved if for no more than a day. Furthermore, when more than one lake was exploited, it is not known if the same individuals or different ones were involved at each lake. Nevertheless, it is obvious from the first figures (the second set given are obviously in error) that only a part of the male population was engaged in commercial fishing. Women did not exploit this resource although at Osnaburgh House and Shoal Lake, on the other hand, several women have been involved in commercial fishing and have their own equipment. Furthermore, there has been no discernable change in the average annual number of fishermen at Round Lake since 1950 even though the population has increased greatly.

TABLE 12. Commercial Fishing – Monthly by Location in Round Lake Area: 1964

Location	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Weagamow										20*		
Wapikiskapika								18				
Caribou												
Nikip									20			
Petownikip								20				
Sakwaso												
Eyapamikama						16						
Magiss												
Windigo				25								
Opapimiska								8				
Total No. of Men (est.)			25	25		16		20	20	20		

* Estimated maximum number of fishermen.

Although the territory occupied by the Round Lake Ojibwa contains more than 2,000 lakes, few have been exploited commercially. In most instances, the lakes are too small to be fished economically. Only about ten lakes are considered of sufficient economic size and have been exploited at one time or another (Table 13). However, over the years, there has been an increasing utilization of the available lakes within the area. Weagamow has been utilized the most and was the only lake fished between 1954 and 1958. Recently, though, according to official reports, fishing has been discontinued in Weagamow. North Caribou and Windigo Lakes have been the other two big producers.

Not all species of fish taken for sale were found evenly distributed throughout the territory of the Round Lake Ojibwa. Tables 13 and 14 indicate what species of fish were taken from the different lakes exploited. Whitefish, pickerel and northern pike were found everywhere within the territory but sturgeon existed only in the west and trout in the east. Sturgeon reported for Eyapamikama Lake seem in error since this lake is located far from any reliably attested habitat of sturgeon.

Daily production of fish varied greatly both for the individual fisherman and in terms of the total yield. Figures exist for the production of all fishermen from February through April of 1954 and refer presumably to Weagamow since no other lake was licensed that year (Table 15). The average daily production of whitefish was 145 pounds and of pickerel 48 pounds. Two thousand yards of net were licensed and approximately twenty men were reported to have been involved. This, it must be remembered was in 1954, four years before commercial fishing really began to develop. The fluctuation in daily production was not unique for the year 1954. Table 16 presents the daily production in 1958-59 for a period of approximately two and a half months. The same situation prevailed.

TABLE 13: Lakes Exploited and Species Secured in Round Lake Area

	Whitefish	Pickerel	Sturgeon	N. Pike	Trout
Round Lake	+	+		+	
Opakapa Lake	+	+		+	
Wapikiskapika	+	+		+	
Agutua					
Joyoy					
Nango					
Berry					
Caribou	+	+		+	+
Nikip	+	+	+	+	
Petownikip	+	+	+	+	
Sakwaso	+	+	?	+	
Eyapamikama	+	+		+	
Seeseep					
Eyapamikama				+(?)	
Magiss	+	+		+	
Senia					
Magiss	+	+	+	+	
Windigo Lake	+	+		+	
Windigo River			+		

TABLE 14. Distribution of Fish Species in Round Lake Area

	Lake Sturgeon	Lake Trout	Lake Whitefish	Lake Herring	Nipigon Cisco	Northern Pike	Longnose Sucker	White Sucker	Northern Red-horse	Emerald Shiner	Spottail Shiner	Longnose Dace	Burbot	Ninespined Stickleback	Trout - Perch	Yellow Perch	Sauger	Pickrel	Johnny Darter	Mottled Sculpin	Fivespined Stickleback	Slimy Sculpin	River Darter
Agutua Lake			X		X	X		X								X	X	X					
Forester Lake	X	X	X			X		X								X		X					
Kinasao Lake	X		X			X		X								X		X					
Magiss Lake	X		X			X		X	X									X					
Makooop Lake			X	X		X		X					X			X		X					
McCoy Lake																							
Nango Lake			X	X	X			X					X			X							
Nikip Lake	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X				
North Caribou		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Ochek Lake			X			X	X	X	X							X		X					
Opapimiskan Lake			X		X	X		X								X		X					
Petownikip Lake	X		X			X		X	X							X	X	X					
Sakwasso Lake	X		X	X		X		X	X							X	X	X					
Skinner Lake			X		X	X		X										X					
Weagamow Lake			X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

From August 27th until September 20th, 1958, records exist as to the yield of whitefish and pickerel for 32 individual fishermen. For whitefish, the individual total production ranged from 2 to 1,744 pounds and for pickerel from 2 to 978 pounds. Not all of the men were continuously engaged as is indicated by the low yields for certain individuals. On the other hand, few men were relatively large producers but no doubt were more steadily engaged.

Over the years, production of commercial fish and income derived from fishing has increased considerably, especially since 1958 (Table 17). During the 1960's, nearly 300,000 pounds of fish were taken annually. In the early 1950's, the yields were much lower but incomes proportionately higher. This was due to the large quantities of sturgeon caught in contrast to later years. Sturgeon have always commanded a higher price per pound than any other species. Throughout the period 1951 to 1970, pickerel, although not taken in as large a quantity as whitefish, almost equalled the latter in monetary return because of the higher price per pound.

Although whitefish have been the major species caught, there have been certain changes in the quantities of other species taken (Table 10). Trout have never been of importance and were only taken for two years. Only recently have pike been

**TABLE 15. Fish Production in Pounds, Round Lake Area:
February-April, 1954**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Whitefish</u>	<u>Pickarel</u>
Feb. 24	870	—
25	429	143
Mar. 3	1,032	442
4	164	141
12	130	110
16	349	135
17	800	360
19	1,060	243
27	862	341
Apr. 2	16	30
3	600	160
6	270	20
8	561	182
9	160	—
12	296	114
14	279	129
16	50	23
20	490	156
25	416	198

**TABLE 16. Daily Fish Production in Pounds, Round Lake Area:
September-October, 1958 and June, 1959**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Whitefish</u>	<u>Pickarel</u>
1958		
Sept. 22	1,020	760
26	2,581	289
29	1,234	452
Oct. 2	3,179	459
6	750	930
9	3,874	812
13	8,713	340
14	1,786	-
20	3,510	-
1959		
June 15	2,360	169
16	2,571	249
17	2,041	175
18	3,272	201
19	540	81
20	299	173
21	147	45
22	581	258
23	2,081	380
24	3,584	476
25	2,195	476
26	2,610	210
27	3,417	756

**TABLE 17. Annual Fish Production by Pounds and Incomes,
Round Lake Area: 1950-1970**

Year	Total Poundage	Total Income
1970	328,000	\$92,000.00
1969	255,000	42,000.00
1968	259,000	42,000.00
1967	311,000	37,000.00
1966	284,000	46,000.00
1965	310,000	32,000.00
1964	342,000	24,000.00
1963	326,000	22,000.00
1962	290,000	18,000.00
1961	234,000	18,000.00
1960	320,000	19,000.00
1959	169,000	14,000.00
1958	78,000	6,000.00
1957	18,000	1,000.00
1956	17,000	3,000.00
1955	24,000	5,000.00
1954	35,000	2,000.00
1953	71,000	5,000.00
1952	18,000	9,000.00
1951	9,000	3,000.00
1950	8,000	8,000.00

sold in any quantity but the price per pound has been negligible. The catch of sturgeon has decreased drastically. Depletion of the fishery is in part responsible but also it is suspected that less time has been spent on those lakes in the western part of the area where sturgeon exist.

Wunnummin Lake: (See appended report by Dr. Garth Taylor. Figures for production and income are included with the figures for Big Trout Lake, Flow Area C-4).

Shoal Lake:

Introduction: The population of the Shoal Lake community is estimated to be a little over 300 individuals, representing about 45 families. Between 20 and 25 people are thought to be living away from the Reserve in Kenora, Winnipeg and Toronto. None are known to be living in the United States. For 1967, Indian Affairs lists 385 individuals as the total enrolment of Shoal Lake Band 39 and Shoal Lake Band 40.

The homes are scattered over a relatively large area within the Reserve boundaries. A Federal Indian Affairs Branch housing program is in effect, erecting between three and four houses each summer. The homes are heated with wood and oil throughout the winter and on occasion electric heaters are also employed. The focal feature is probably the store run by Shoal Lake Fisheries, an outside operation. It is said, however, that it is to close in November 1971. In addition, there is one nursing station where a local woman is in charge. The one church,

Presbyterian, is inactive. There are two schools on the Reserve but only one is in use giving instruction up to Grade 4. For further education, the children must go to Kenora where they attend integrated schools. In addition, there is a community hall but no marinas. There is no bus service but at least one individual from the community has a car and acts as a taxi service. It is said that recently more and more people are buying cars.

The nearest Indian settlement is at Northwest Angle but since land divides it from the Shoal Lake settlement and there are no connecting roads, it is necessary to go by way of Lake of the Woods. On Lake of the Woods is the Whitefish Bay community with a population said to be greater than Shoal Lake and thought to be between 300 and 400 or even more. Indian Affairs lists 296 individuals as enrolled in the Whitefish Bay Band for 1967.

Commercial Fishing: At Shoal Lake commercial fishing and the gathering of wild rice are the two major sources of earned income. Little else exists in the way of employment opportunities within the confines of the Reserve. Each Band (Shoal Lake No. 39 and Shoal Lake No. 40) is allowed 6,000 yards of gill net with which to pursue commercial fishing.

A variety of equipment is needed in order to engage in this activity. All commercial fishing is carried out with gill nets, each 100 (?) yards long, which cost \$19.00 each in Winnipeg and if used carelessly or intensively will not last more than a year. At the Shoal Lake Fisheries store, nets cost between \$26.00 and \$28.00. In addition, a boat and motor are needed. In the latter case an 18 Horse Power or 20 Horse Power is the desired size. Gas costs on the average about \$5.00 a week for two motors if fishing is steady. Gas costs \$3.50 for 5 gallons but the gas tax is rebated. The maximum amount of gas used would be 5 gallons in one day. Finally, fish boxes are required in which to place the ice and, on returning to the store, the fish. Each box has in the past cost about \$1.00.

The amount of equipment needed for a fisherman to be productive is between 12 and 15 good nets, a boat and a motor, and approximately 6 fish boxes. This is the Ojibwa point of view. The initial cost for the equipment is estimated at between \$2,000.00 and \$3,000.00. This may be somewhat high. The quantity of fishing equipment owned by the Shoal Lake Ojibwa is not known but it is said that a number of families have no equipment and many others have little or poor equipment.

The non-Indians fishing in the same area employ boats with inboard motors. Their boats and motors cost in the neighbourhood of \$2,500.00 for each outfit. In addition, although it was not specified, the non-Indians apparently use trap nets. The Indians do not have these and apparently cannot afford them since at least one individual expressed the desire to own one.

The principal fish caught are pickerel, whitefish and northern pike. The first brings the highest price per pound and the last the least.

The fish are dressed immediately after being caught and if it is summer they are packed in ice in the fish boxes. Once the fisherman has attended all of his nets, he returns directly to the Shoal Lake Fisheries store where his fish are weighed, repacked and sold. But on Thursdays and Sundays the store is closed. This organization operates on behalf of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The fish are then transported from Shoal Lake to Keewatin where apparently they are repacked and sent to Winnipeg.

There is a seasonality in the commercial fisheries due to legally closed seasons

and to a decrease at certain times of the year in productivity of the lake. This latter is, of course, related to the technology employed in fishing. When the closed season opens on May 21, fishing commences and continues throughout the summer and fall and into early winter. Generally it ends sometime in December but nets may remain in the water longer and not be taken out until the second week in January. Nevertheless, fishing is poor from late December until late March. Fishing commences again in the middle or latter part of March and continues until April 14th when the season is closed.

Nets are checked in the mornings right after breakfast. On the average, it takes from two to four hours to check the nets although this varies depending upon the number of nets that are set, the distance the nets are from the fisherman's home and the size of the catch that may be made. Besides the tending of the nets, other activities connected with commercial fishing are involved. The rest of the day or a good part of it may be devoted to the cleaning and drying of any nets that have been pulled. Afterwards there is also the necessity to reset the nets. Therefore, it may require a whole day to do all the various tasks involved with commercial fishing. But this would not necessarily be true for every day of the fishing season.

Fishing is carried on within the immediate vicinity of the fisherman's home (Map 3). The maximum distance in Shoal Lake from home to the nets is eight to ten miles. This is about as far as one can go within the designated areas where the Shoal Lake Ojibwa are allowed to fish commercially.

The number of individuals engaged in commercial fishing varies throughout the year. Immediately after the season opens on May 21st, there may be 15 to 16 boats engaged in commercial fishing but only for about three weeks. During the summer few individuals are involved and during the summer of 1971 only two families were engaged steadily in this activity. In September and October, there is an increase in the number of fishermen, amounting to about 15. By November, the number has dropped to 7 or 8. Thereafter the numbers decrease and throughout most of the winter little if any commercial fishing is undertaken. Several weeks prior to the closing of the season on April 14th, a number of individuals, sometimes as many as 15, again start commercial fishing and continue until the season is closed.

Commercial fishing tends to be an individual or family affair. Occasionally, two men from different households will go together in the same boat. Basically, though, no organization beyond the family level occurs in commercial fishing.

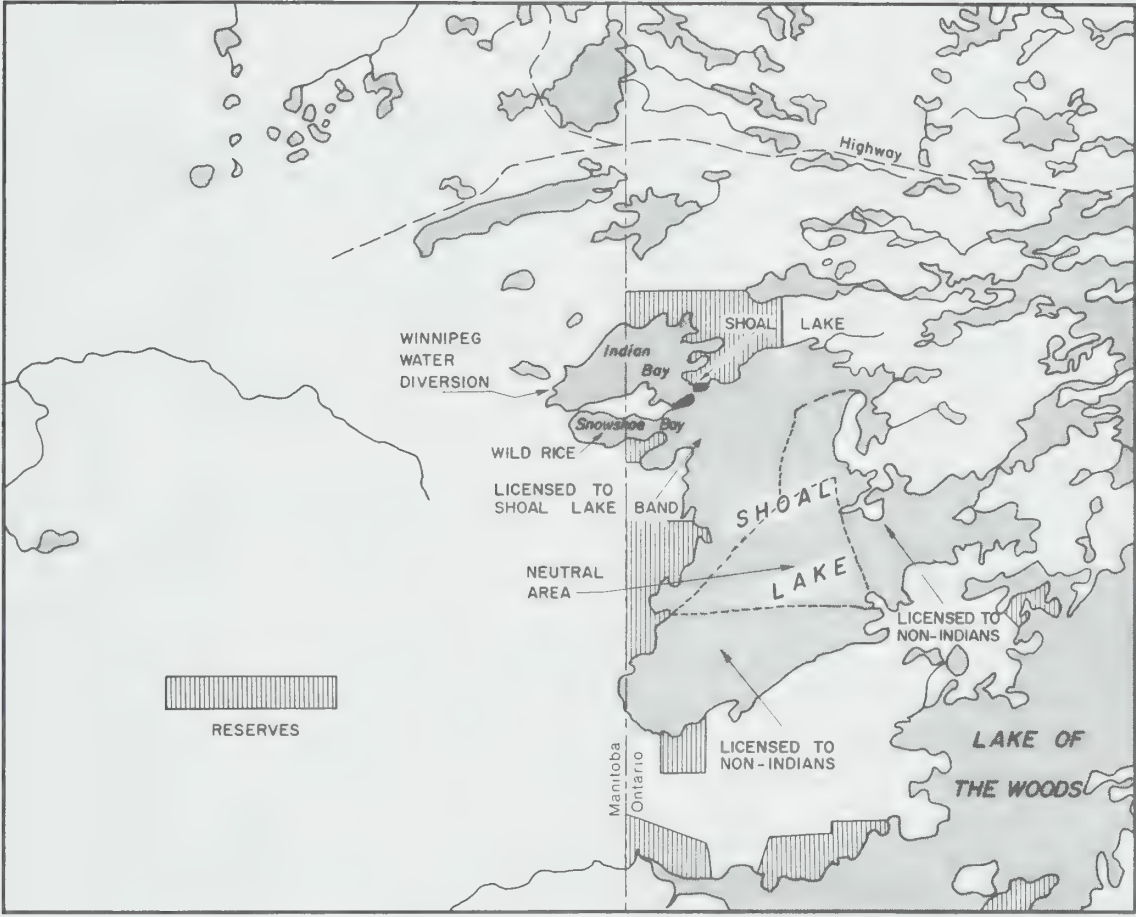
The income derived from commercial fishing varies greatly as might be expected. A family or individual who fishes steadily and has at least 12 nets will earn between \$4,000.00 and \$5,000.00 annually. At the most productive times of the year, an individual may earn as much as \$100.00 a day. But, as noted, only two families of Shoal Lake Ojibwa fish steadily at present. Other families fish spring and fall, perhaps 15 in all, while the rest of the families, perhaps about 30, do no fishing.

Table 18 presents the data on production and income for Flow Area B-1 (Map 2) which includes Lake of the Woods and Shoal Lake. This takes in the settlement of Shoal Lake, Whitefish Bay and perhaps Northwest Angle. Eighty-six fishermen are involved of whom about 45 are Indian.

There is no ritual involved in either commercial or subsistence fishing and apparently there never has been.

Other Employment: As previously mentioned, local job opportunities are extremely limited. It is necessary therefore to go further afield for employment. Furthermore most employment is seasonal.

During the summer there is employment in the surrounding area as guides and in cutting pulpwood at such locations as Dundee Lake north of the Reserve.



Map 3

THE SETTLEMENT OF SHOAL LAKE AND ENVIRONS

TABLE 18. Annual Production in Pounds and Income by Species ,
Lake of the Woods, Flow Area B-1: 1966-1970.

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>
	<u>Pounds</u>				
Pike	272,971	319,644	312,433	320,439	299,809
Burbot	171,563	196,463	218,590	191,560	145,116
Suckers	212,128	257,608	324,554	325,662	329,090
L. Herring	95,522	255,196	226,773	232,616	167,518
Whitefish	45,539	50,895	80,117	68,162	69,142
Pickrel	257,907	381,129	628,355	653,960	504,651
	<u>1,055,630¹</u>	<u>1,460,935</u>	<u>1,790,822</u>	<u>1,792,399</u>	<u>1,515,326</u>
	<u>Income</u>				
Pike	\$ 30,766	\$ 36,198	\$ 31,628	\$ 30,778	\$ 27,012
Burbot	1,733	2,217	3,696	3,434	2,682
Suckers	3,598	2,150	6,592	5,187	3,905
L. Herring	4,002	11,088	10,397	10,685	5,612
Whitefish	13,937	20,258	28,516	19,408	20,090
Pickrel	<u>101,556</u>	<u>156,189</u>	<u>196,373</u>	<u>175,388</u>	<u>197,296</u>
	<u>\$ 155,592</u>	<u>\$ 228,100</u>	<u>\$ 277,202</u>	<u>\$ 244,880</u>	<u>\$ 256,597</u>

In the fall, a few families hunt moose, deer and ducks to secure food for the coming winter. Some may also pick berries for sale in Kenora. Fall is also the time for the wild rice harvest, a resource similar to commercial fish for the Shoal Lake Indians. However, the rice yield varies from year to year as does the price for rice. If the water remains low, rice apparently thrives and the harvest will be very good. But if the water level rises, it drowns out the rice. It appears that control of the water level in Shoal Lake by non-Indians has brought about a reduction in the natural rice harvest.

The rice harvest is controlled by a Rice Committee. The Committee sends the rice pickers out at the appropriate times and watches the rice fields as the harvesting takes place. Harvesting is not carried on every day but only when the Committee says it can be done. If the Committee sees that the rice is being knocked down too much, they stop the harvesting and rest the fields for a day. Sometimes the Committee will rule that the field is to be given a rest for two days in a row in order for more rice to ripen. Afterwards, they will allow the harvest to continue, though it may be for no more than a day or only half a day. It depends on the condition of the rice fields. The ripest section of the field is harvested first and everyone participates.

The Rice Committee is chosen at a meeting of the band. Usually certain individuals, the older people, are chosen for the Committee. As yet, there have been no problems of the individuals disobeying the rulings of the Committee. However, this has occurred in other areas where individuals have come in too early and damaged the crop.

The best way to harvest is for two people to go out together in a canoe. One

paddles and the other harvests. The harvesting is a skilled operation and not all are capable of doing it without damaging the stalks. There are no allotted sections for either individuals or families. The rice is sold green.

If the work is well organized, the rice harvest lasts about three weeks. One site on Shoal Lake has lasted a month or more. It might mean in a three week period that ten days were spent in harvesting and two people would obtain around 1,000 lbs. of rice. In a good year, two people could easily make \$100.00 a day harvesting rice.

Before the harvest commences there is the "Feast for Rice", **Wekwandah**, a form of thanksgiving. After the harvest is over there may be individual family ceremonies.

Starting in the fall and lasting until the spring there is the possibility of trapping. Only one family continues to trap but the head of this family is an older man. Few others appear to involve themselves with trapping. Mink and beaver are the principal species taken although recently there have been signs of otter. The numbers of muskrat depend upon the water level.

The seasonal activities available to the people of Shoal Lake have been outlined above. In addition, some handicrafts are made on an irregular basis but production is extremely limited. At least one woman produces some for sale in Kenora. As yet, tourists are few in number at Shoal Lake. They began to arrive four to five years ago and one camp, catering to a few tourists, has been established on Shoal Lake. Tourists cause some problems. During the spring, 20 to 25 large boats are brought in on the weekends and the tourists, in their travels about the lake, damage and often destroy some of the fishermen's nets.

Most employment opportunities are outside the community. A woodcraft factory is in operation in Kenora where jobs have been found. However, opportunities in Kenora are limited and it is necessary to go further afield, such as Winnipeg for work.

Whitedog:

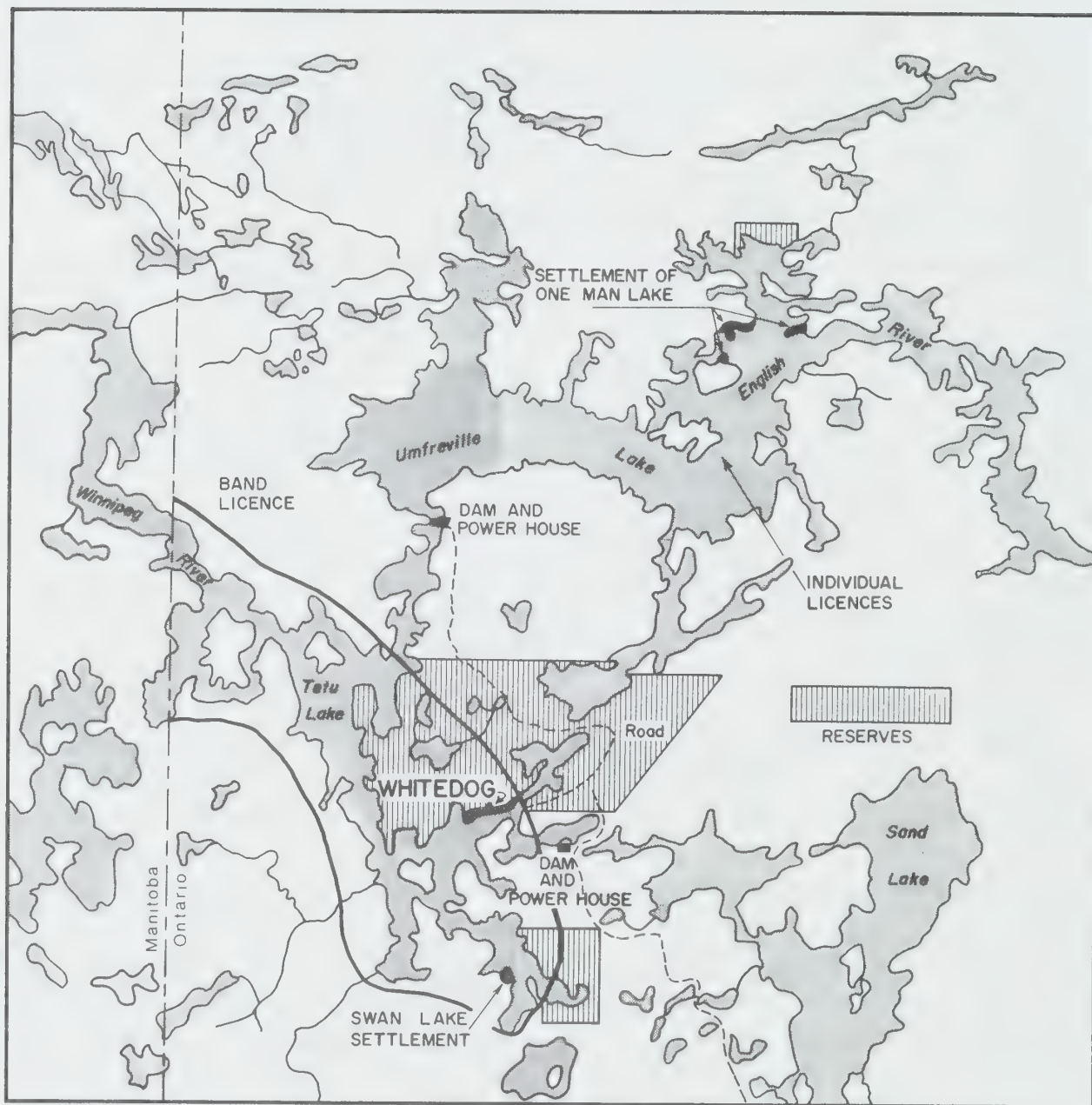
Introduction: The settlement of Whitedog is composed of individuals recently inhabiting three distinct villages (Map 4). The settlement at One Man Lake was flooded forcing the people to move into Whitedog. The Swan Lake settlement people moved to Whitedog in order to be near the school so that it would not necessitate their having to bus their children to Whitedog. All three settlements were under one band number.

Six hundred and forty-four Indians are registered in the Whitedog Band but only about 540 individuals live in the village of Whitedog. The others are living in Kenora, Minaki and Malachi. None, as far as is known, have moved to the United States.

The village itself is spread out along the Winnipeg River for about two miles. It is now connected to the outside by a road, the last three miles from Whitedog dam having been completed several years ago.

The settlement of Whitedog has a community or council hall and a day school with grades up to grade 8. For high school, the youth, only five or six are involved at present, are sent to Kenora. The community is attempting to have grade 9 established at Whitedog and the people hope that through the educational process a "bright" future exists for their children.

There is a store at Whitedog but it is run by a non-Indian operator. It is felt that the store should be run by an Indian. It is estimated that \$30,000.00 a month in



Map 4

THE SETTLEMENT OF WHITEDOG AND ENVIRONS

allowances, etc., pass through the community and since the store is operated by an outsider the money is taken out of the community.

In addition to the store and other facilities in the community, there is a Roman Catholic and an Anglican Church. Missionaries for the latter Church have left and for the former come only about once a month, generally only when there is someone to bury. Although the people had withdrawn from the church, they do not understand why it is that the missionaries have "deserted" them. No marinas exist at Whitedog.

Commercial Fishing: Before commercial fishing was closed this year because of mercury, there were 20 to 25 families involved. Usually a man and his wife worked together, although sometimes a man teamed up with a relative. Formerly, a band licence allowing 2,000 yards was issued, but, two years ago, individual licences were established. There were two fishing areas, one of which was on the Winnipeg River. Here two individuals held a licence in their own names. Nevertheless, the band allowed others to fish in the area. Two thousand yards was the limit for this licence. The other area exploited commercially was One Man Lake. In addition to yardage limits, quotas were placed on pickerel and whitefish.

Some families fished from the beginning of the season until the end. Others fished only part time. During the summer, they would go guiding for a week or so between short periods of fishing. As summer advanced, they sometimes took time off to pick blueberries and later to gather wild rice.

It was possible to earn between \$500.00 and \$600.00 a month fishing commercially. In order to do this, however, one had to have three or four nets, each 100 yards long and fish steadily. Nets were fairly expensive since the fishermen had to purchase them through a middleman. The cost varied depending upon the depth of the meshes. The lowest price is \$19.00 if the nets are obtained directly in Winnipeg. Even here though, the price fluctuates and only a few months ago they were selling for \$20.00 to \$22.00 apiece. Therefore the average price of nets is probably close to \$22.00 or \$23.00. At Whitedog, however, because of the middleman, they cost between \$28.00 and \$30.00.

To assist the commercial fisheries, Indian Affairs had set up a packing house and an ice house. The people were to form a committee to run the operation, but then the fishery was closed because of mercury contamination. Accordingly, the committee never had a chance to come into operation.

Originally the fishermen employed 5 H.P. motors for their work but later they acquired larger ones, between 10 and 20 H.P. Now, when they can afford them, they use 20 to 30 H.P. motors. Each motor costs from \$400.00 on up. The fishermen also use fairly large boats. The cost of a boat and motor would be in the neighbourhood of \$1,000.00.

The farthest away from the village that commercial fishing is carried on is between 12 and 15 miles. This would be near the Manitoba border. To fish at such a distance, one uses approximately 10 gallons of gas per day at a cost of \$1.00 a gallon.

The fish were shipped to market by truck. In the past, four or five buyers came from Minaki and Kenora.

Whitedog is within Flow Area B-4. But since six other Indian bands are also involved in this region, it is not possible to determine what the production and incomes are for Whitedog from the existing figures.

Other Employment: Although a fair amount of welfare has been issued annually in the past, it has increased tremendously since commercial fishing was stopped. A fair amount of hunting of ducks, deer and moose is undertaken to secure food for

themselves. The rice fields in the English River that were formerly exploited have now been flooded by Hydro. This event has ended another source of food and income.

A pulpwood operation exists on the Reserve and the people have tried to operate it themselves. The pulpwood operation is seasonal work and is disrupted when the men undertake commercial fishing or guiding. In addition, the men are now cutting timber and producing lumber for a new school to be built shortly. Since this enterprise came into existence six to eight men have had relatively stable employment. At the present time, activities are increasing and 15 to 20 new men are to be employed. These will be individuals who were the active fishermen. Furthermore, four to five men have now been trained as carpenters and are working, apparently on the Reserve.

Trapping is not a major economic activity. At the start of this year's (1971) season, only five men were involved. These same men were also the active commercial fishermen. Beaver are the principle fur sought, although otter and mink occur. The latter, however, brings an extremely low price because of the competition from mink ranches. Although a quota is placed on beaver, some individuals are allowed as many as 100. Each individual trapper has between 20 and 30 traps, of the conibear and No.4 leg-hold types.

Minaki is the closest town for employment but there are four or more tourist camps nearby which can employ as many as 15 guides each.

Couchiching:

Introduction: The registered band population of Couchiching is in the neighbourhood of 535 most of whom are Catholics. Of the total number, only about 365 individuals, approximately 70 families, are living on the Reserve. The remainder have moved, in many instances, to the United States, some going as far as Oregon. No stores exist on the reserve, only small outlets where milk, bread and cigarettes can be purchased. There is really no need for a store since it is only a mile and a half to two miles into the centre of Fort Frances. One community hall exists but it is old and at present a new one is being built. One residential school is in operation on the Reserve but it is not for the Couchiching children. The latter are taken by bus into four Catholic schools in Fort Frances, one of which is a high school. A rather high dropout rate occurs especially at the high school level.

Much of the Reserve land is leased for air bases (Rainy Lake, Voyageurs and Myers), a sawmill, the agency property, a golf course and a park.

Commercial Fishing: Twelve to fifteen fishermen, all members of the Rainy Lake Fishermen's Association, have been operating in Rainy Lake but only two are Treaty Indians. Nevertheless, 75% of the licence holders consider themselves of Indian ancestry. Each individual fisherman is assigned a specified fishing area. Although the Indian fishermen use only gill nets, other more expensive equipment could be obtained. It appears that the Indian Affairs Branch development fund could be drawn upon to obtain monies to purchase any equipment needed. But now since there is a mercury "problem", it is felt that there would be no point in anyone investing any money in a commercial fishing operation.

No Indian bands hold commercial fishing licences. Instead, the licences are held individually. Earnings appear to have been fairly good. One individual Indian fisherman earned \$4,100.00 last year but because of mercury this has not been possible this year. In this case, it was felt that any compensation that might be made for his equipment would be so little as to be of minimal assistance to him.

Commercial fishing was considered to have been much better in the past. One individual's father would check his nets twice a day, having two sets, and would secure between 2,100 and 2,200 pounds of pickerel weekly. Formerly, 400 to 500

pounds of pickerel could be taken in a single day during the fall. This was at the time when a hatchery was in existence to annually restock the lake. Today, one is lucky to obtain four or five pickerel.

Other Employment: Employment possibilities seem limited. When there is no commercial fishing, individuals attempt to get guiding jobs but there is no guarantee that they can obtain such employment. Furthermore, not many Indians are employed on the Reserve by those businesses that have leased land there. Nor does it appear that there is a possibility for additional employment in these occupations in the future. Accordingly, the cost of welfare is quite high, especially during the winter. At the present time, a ceramics programme is being undertaken on the Reserve and seven to eight married women of all ages are involved. Finally, many Indians would do more hunting of game for their own use if they had the unlimited right to do so.

Rainy Lake Fishermen's Association: As mentioned, the Association represents the fourteen to fifteen fishermen who operate on Rainy and Namakan Lakes. The fishermen tend to be the older people and it was stated that they would not want to move to some other lake if the fishing in their present area was closed. The young people don't see any future in commercial fishing at the present time and are not involved. Association members feel that commercial fishing will be a lost profession soon.

Each fisherman, it was said, earns between \$5,000.00 and \$10,000.00 annually. (This would appear to be somewhat high. See Table 19). It is steady employment for these individuals and they have never had to rely on welfare.

Each commercial fisherman has invested between \$5,000.00 and \$25,000.00 in equipment. One individual last spring expended \$400.00 on fish boxes alone.

A variety of species of fish are present in Rainy Lake but not all are commercially important. Pickerel and northern pike accounted for approximately 90% of the production. Around 1905, whitefish and sturgeon were plentiful and good producers. But today, whitefish are not plentiful and the price is lower than that paid for pickerel. It is contended that the establishment of dams and the consequent fluctuation in water levels kill the whitefish eggs. It is thought that so long as the fish hatcheries were in operation, the population of whitefish was maintained. When the hatcheries were closed, it is contended, a decline in the numbers of whitefish occurred. At present, it is said that in the South Arm using approximately nine nets, one would only take between 35 and 40 pounds of whitefish a day. Also caught are rock bass, suckers, burbot, yellow perch, crappies and mooneyes. The latter, though, are taken in limited numbers.

There is no quota system at the present but such is advocated for next year. Nevertheless, commercial fishing is restricted to 4-1/2 inch mesh nets and for pickerel and northern pike the legal size limit is 16 inch for commercial fishermen. On the other hand, there is no size limit for the tourists.

Rainy Lake is part of the Flow Area E-1 with annual production in pounds and income by species given in Table 19. It is reported that approximately 17 fishermen are involved and that 4 are Indian. Because of Mercury contamination, pickerel and northern pike in Redgut Bay and South Arm cannot be taken and sold.

According to the fishermen, other forms of employment seem to be relatively limited. During the summer, there is the possibility of guiding but from their point of view it seems to be getting more difficult to obtain such employment since guiding opportunities decreased this past year. In the winter there is the possibility of cutting pulp.

**TABLE 19. Annual Production in Pounds and Income by Species,
Rainy Lake, Flow Area E-1: 1966-70**

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1966</u>
	<u>Pounds</u>				
Pike	128,023	135,027	153,225	139,869	126,722
Burbot	78,569	74,484	55,244	43,652	29,388
Suckers	210,641	188,659	150,230	140,798	118,444
L. Herring	—	—	5,029	—	—
Whitefish	41,188	50,385	53,964	43,729	22,668
Pickrel	<u>49,687</u>	<u>52,213</u>	<u>79,756</u>	<u>74,298</u>	<u>87,047</u>
	<u>508,108</u>	<u>500,768</u>	<u>497,448</u>	<u>442,346</u>	<u>384,269</u>
	<u>Income</u>				
Pike	\$ 14,747.	\$ 13,206.	\$ 13,786.	\$ 11,608.	\$ 10,840.
Burbot	1,828.	1,386.	612.	347.	200.
Suckers	3,222.	3,831.	2,251.	1,384.	1,091.
L. Herring	-	-	20	-	-
Whitefish	11,906	12,643	13,668	10,063	6,086
Pickrel	<u>24,657</u>	<u>21,943.</u>	<u>28,563.</u>	<u>24,711.</u>	<u>38,433.</u>
	<u>\$56,360</u>	<u>\$53,009</u>	<u>\$58,900</u>	<u>\$48,113</u>	<u>\$56,650</u>

SUMMARY

Intensive and extensive commercial fishing is a new development for the Ojibwa of Northwestern Ontario. Beginnings were made in the 1930's but the tempo did not increase until the late 1950's. At that time, efforts were made to encourage commercial fishing among the Ojibwa and for the next decade there was a steady increase not only in the production of fish for sale but in incomes. In many communities, commercial fishing came to be the dominant economic activity providing monies well in excess of that earned from trapping or any other local activity. Nevertheless, the figures indicate that fisheries production reached a plateau in the late 1960's and in some instances has begun to decline both in terms of quantities of fish caught and the income derived from fishing. In other cases, the latter has been maintained or even increased because of the increased prices (Table 20).

Commercial fishing is not only an important economic activity but is one that is congenial to the Ojibwa and adaptive to their patterns of environmental utilization as formerly undertaken. Furthermore, commercial fishing does not conflict to any extent with trapping since the two activities are practiced at different times of the year. Commercial fishing is a seasonal activity undertaken primarily during the spring and fall. In some of the southern areas it does conflict in the fall with the gathering of wild rice. Commercial fishing, furthermore, is an individual or family undertaking which fits well into the behavioral patterns of the Ojibwa.

Average income varies greatly for the commercial fisherman throughout Northwestern Ontario. Incomes range from approximately \$300.00 to \$3,000.00 per fisherman according to his band. But incomes within each band are not evenly distributed among the fishermen since a large percentage of the production is secured by relatively few of the fishermen who work at this activity steadily. Accordingly, a few make a fairly decent income while the rest simply augment

whatever other incomes they secure through a limited amount of commercial fishing.

The equipment employed by the commercial fishermen, excluding the Euro-Canadians is relatively limited. The cost of an outfit is in the neighbourhood of \$2,000.00. Although this does not represent a large capital investment for most members of Euro-Canadian society, it is relatively high for the Ojibwa.

Operating costs are also fairly high, especially if the fisheries are located at any distances from the homes of the fishermen. The cost of gas is the major expense. There is also the rather high depreciation cost of the equipment. Nets, for example, generally last for only one season.

The overall view is that commercial fishing as an economic activity of significance is tending to decline for a variety of reasons. A major factor of course in certain areas is the closing of lakes due to mercury contamination of the fish. In addition, the cost to the Indians of fishing is in many cases not commensurate with the return. Finally, the commercial fisheries are exploited primarily by the older members of the society and as these individuals retire, fishing will decrease further.

PART III VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE

The Ojibwa: The Indians expressed a variety of opinions regarding commercial fishing as an activity in their lives. Their remarks focused upon several major areas – commercial fishing itself, the tourist industry, Treaty rights, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and thoughts regarding solutions to the problems developing in the commercial fisheries. First, a word of caution. The following comments are based upon a very small sample.

Commercial fishing is not considered hard work except when winds of up to 20 or 30 miles an hour are blowing. It is also considered pleasurable but a task that must be learned from childhood. Today, however, few children accompany their parents when the latter are engaged in commercial fishing. Nor are the youth involved in this activity. Only the older people are continuing the tradition. It is felt that one could learn the techniques of commercial fishing in one season but to be a really skilled fisherman it would take perhaps 10 to 20 years.

Commercial fishing, it was felt, was beneficial to the fish population. Individuals maintained that if fishing were to be stopped, for example at Shoal Lake, the lake would become overstocked with fish within 4 to 6 years.

The Ojibwa feel that the tourists are a problem but one that has been fostered by government action. Indians feel that the tourists are given access to the country purely because of the monetary return that is foreseen. Accordingly, many of the actions taken by the government in relation to the Commercial fisheries are thought by the Indians to be in favour of the tourist and detrimental to the commercial fisherman. The following actions are seen as a deliberate policy on the part of the government to eliminate the commercial fisherman. The fish hatcheries have been closed and according to the Ojibwa there has been a decrease in the catch of commercially profitable fish. The government has increased the legal size limit on fish caught commercially and the legal mesh size resulting in a reduction in the quantity of fish caught. At the same time, however, the government has removed the legal size limit from fish that the anglers take. Finally, the government withdrew the "coupon system" and now the tourists can, if they desire, take their limit of fish several times a day. There is also a concern over the damage that the tourists are stated to do to the fishermen's nets.

Treaty rights are of concern to the Ojibwa and in some instances it is felt that these rights have been violated by government action. There was concern not only for the Treaty Indians but for the non-Treaty individuals of Indian ancestry who were considered to be in a rough position. In connection with Treaty rights and other areas of Indian concern, it is felt that the Euro-Canadians do not consider fully the Indian's point of view. Often, it is stated, the government has its mind made up before it even consults the Indians with what it plans to do. As a case in point, the Ojibwa cited the government's advocacy of live bait enterprises to replace commercial fisheries. This it was felt had been instigated by the Euro-Canadian rather than having come from the Indians themselves.

The question of Reserve boundaries as they relate to the "headland" clause in the Treaties was raised. In connection with the headland problem was that of dam construction on the part of Hydro. The raising of the water level had changed the shore line configuration and it was felt that this had taken certain bodies of water away from Treaty control. Stanjikoming Bay in Rainy Lake was cited as a case in point. Apparently, the raising of the water level has altered, in the minds of the Indians, the legal status of this bay. The tourists enter right after the fishing season opens and this action, it is felt, affects the pickerel population. It was thought that

the bay should be closed to the tourists until at least June 15th in order to preserve the pickerel. It is a bay in which, it is believed, only one person could make a living by means of commercial fishing but the tourists were not helping the situation. Another case was Indian Bay in Shoal Lake. This might be considered a part of the Reserve if the headland problem was resolved and therefore out of bounds to non-Indian fishermen except with permission. Furthermore, the Winnipeg Water District obtains its water from the Falcon River and Indian Bay and this may to some extent affect the water level. In the area of Whitedog, it was claimed that flooding due to the erection of dams had ruined the rice fields. Apparently, some compensation has been made but this was not considered to have resolved the situation. Throughout the southern area of Northwestern Ontario, there was strong concern expressed over the flooding of rice fields which eliminated the gathering of wild rice as a livelihood. Furthermore, it was thought that the fluctuations in water level brought about by the erection of dams and the control of the water by Hydro often killed the fish eggs. Finally, the raising of the water level had cut off points of land from the Reserves. Concern is voiced as to the Ojibwa's rights under Treaty No. 3 to fish and hunt where they wished.

A final aspect that concerned a few was whether or not those individual Treaty Indians who resided away from their Reserve in order to engage in commercial fishing would now return home. This raised the question as to what to do regarding additional housing. However, few individuals appear to be involved.

Some discussion took place regarding the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Mixed feelings regarding the Corporation seem to exist. Although fish prices have been stable ever since the Corporation came into operation and established one price throughout the year, this has bothered some fishermen. Formerly in the spring and fall, the highest prices were given for fish and these were the two seasons when many of the fishermen were active, discontinuing commercial fishing at other times of the year. Accordingly, some individuals maintain that the price for fish was much better before the Marketing Corporation came into existence. They do not appreciate that the price is averaged out between the highs and lows throughout the year. Other commercial fishermen, however, feel that the marketing board is a good arrangement. Nevertheless, there are those who want the best price they can possibly get for their fish. On the other hand, there has been no problem concerning the payment for fish. Payments are made immediately, for example, at the Shoal Lake Fisheries. In the case of Whitedog, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation did not have a chance to begin operation before commercial fishing was stopped because of mercury contamination. Accordingly, no real feeling exists one way or the other regarding the Corporation.

As to solutions, a number were put forward. Although the people would miss commercial fishing, since for many it has been a way of life for many years and is their life's work, they realize fishing may have to cease. Nevertheless, they feel that commercial fishing should be kept going wherever it is viable. If not, they have certain ideas as to what might be done.

First, the feeling exists that no one would want to move away from home because of the collapse of commercial fishing, especially the older people. The land means a great deal to the Ojibwa. The able bodied might go but would want to keep their homes on the reserves and be able to return to them at any time if commercial fishing did not prove viable elsewhere.

Welfare, it is felt, has been a factor in bringing about a decrease in a desire to undertake commercial fishing. To receive welfare is easy and accordingly has been a bad influence. The Ojibwa, in part at least, do not wish to see welfare become a

substitute for commercial fishing. Even compensation for being deprived of commercial fishing was viewed with some misgivings. It was felt that the fishermen would just sit back and wait for the next cheque. This was not thought to be good.

Certain individuals felt that fundamentally the Ojibwa themselves should take the initiative. In this connection, it was considered unfortunate that the Indians had no real voice in the government nor were there any Indians in the government who could speak for them.

Several solutions to the commercial fisheries problem were proposed. One was that industries might be brought to the Reserves rather than having the people move away. A sewing factory has been discussed for some years at Shoal Lake yet no action has ever been taken even though a number of women had signed up to work in the operation. In this connection, it was felt at Shoal Lake that subsidies should be arranged for the retraining of the individuals, especially those who might be prohibited from commercial fishing, so that they might improve their incomes.

It was thought that coarse fish would be marketable in outside areas if transportation costs to market were subsidized. On the other hand, there was a strong feeling that the Ojibwa would not wish to fish for coarse fish for sale to mink ranches for mink food. These individuals felt that this was simply a means whereby the sport fisheries would be improved for the tourists. This thought did not appeal to them. On the other hand, there was a feeling that there might be some opportunity to sell fish locally to people who might wish to purchase small amounts. Sales, they realized, would not be too great but they would add a certain amount of income for a few families.

Finally, the thought was expressed at Shoal Lake that if it were necessary to close the commercial fisheries then at the same time the tourists should not be allowed to fish either.

The Euro-Canadians: The non-Indian fishermen have concerns regarding their profession which are in part similar to the views expressed by the Ojibwa. The Ojibwa, however, have other and wider concerns because of their Treaty rights, a deep sense of commitment to the environment and their feeling of being the original inhabitants of the land. Furthermore, the views expressed by the Indians do not reflect the deep concern for materialism as do the remarks made by the Euro-Canadians.

Perhaps the most sensitive area for the Euro-Canadian fisherman is that of the tourist developments that have and are taking place in Northwestern Ontario. To these fishermen, the closing of certain commercial fisheries because of mercury contamination is another example of the governments desire to eliminate the commercial fishermen and allow the tourists to enter and have full enjoyment of the fisheries resources. Mercury contamination, therefore, is a basic issue with the Euro-Canadian commercial fisherman. They feel that the scientists panicked on the basis of too little information and knowledge. The feeling is that the mercury count should be raised from 0.5 to 1.0 parts per million. They recognize, however, that the Americans set the figure and it is the Americans who purchase the bulk of the fish. Furthermore, it is recognized that the American standard is based on that promulgated by the World Health Organization. Nevertheless, the Euro-Canadian fishermen are not convinced that anything is wrong with the fish in which high mercury content has been found. It is felt that the mercury problem started with the industrial pollution in Lake St. Clair and has spread, affecting the lives of a great many people in Ontario. Since it has affected the lives of so many commercial fishermen, those in Northwestern Ontario wonder why it is that the Americans are allowed to continue to fish. Since the tourists take more fish than the commercial

fishermen do and such contaminated fish are considered dangerous, the Euro-Canadian fishermen can not understand why the Americans are allowed to continue. The tourists apparently never cease to arrive and fish except during the closed season and during break-up and freeze-up.

On the other hand, there are those Euro-Canadians who are not commercial fishermen who believe that in the southern section of Northwestern Ontario commercial fishing must make way for the tourist industry. To the north, these individuals see the possibility of commercial fisheries being continued and operated primarily by Ojibwa. But even in this region, as the tourists expand further northward, there may be a limit to the extent of commercial fishing.

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation appeared to pose a problem in the minds of the commercial fishermen. They considered the Corporation appropriate but only for those commercial fishermen operating in the northern part of Northwestern Ontario. In the south where the fishermen are close to the market, they believed the Marketing Corporation should be just another buyer.

The commercial fishermen feel strongly that the enterprise should be kept going. But because of the limited economic return, subsidies should be provided for the operation of the commercial fisheries and the marketing of the produce. It is believed that the northern fisheries are subsidized and that often whitefish are sold at .10¢ a pound when the actual cost is .16¢ to fly them out to market. Accordingly, there is in effect a .06¢ subsidy. In this connection they maintain that there should be a better price paid for coarse fish in order to allow the fishermen to earn a decent wage.

Although the commercial fishermen feel that there is an economic necessity to maintain the commercial fisheries, they also advance the argument that this activity keeps the fish population in balance. The commercial fishermen take not only the saleable species but also the coarse fish which the tourist can not catch. It is felt that the coarse fish must be taken or removed to allow the commercially important species to survive. It is said that the coarse species eat the eggs of the valuable ones. Accordingly, if commercial fishing is discontinued the government will have to hire fishermen to remove the coarse fish to allow for a productive sports fishery.

Finally, the Euro-Canadian fishermen thought that if the commercial fisheries can not be maintained through subsidization, then a possible solution might be found in the retraining of the commercial fishermen who found themselves unemployed. Retraining should be along lines that utilize the fishermen's previous skills and knowledge. The suggestion was made that they might be trained to make nets or fish boxes.

PART IV CONCLUSIONS

The preceding data do not lend themselves to any clear cut and definitive conclusion regarding the future of commercial fishing or an alternative for it in Northwestern Ontario. The quantitative data seem to be relatively easily evaluated. The qualitative data are much more difficult to interpret since they are based on human emotions, sentiments and values, in this case those of the Ojibwa. As yet, no one has found a means of interpreting such material which is free of error. The following conclusions are no exception.

It is apparent that subsistence fishing has always been a part of the economic system of the Northern Ojibwa. It was most important during the last century. During the present century, especially the last decade, subsistence fishing has decreased. The extent of the decrease has varied being greatest in the south and least in the north. Nevertheless, it appears safe to say that subsistence fishing is no longer a significant feature of the local Ojibwa economy except perhaps in a few northern settlements. Today, only small amounts of fish are used for dog food and trap bait. Fish are still eaten at home and in the more remote communities may account for as much as a quarter of all food consumed annually. In the more southern parts of Northwestern Ontario, it appears that fish are eaten, on the average, no more than they are elsewhere in southern Canada.

Commercial fishing, on the other hand, has been a relatively recent development among the Northern Ojibwa. It did have its antecedence in some restricted areas when the traders engaged the Indians to fish for the posts. But it was not until the 1930's that fishing was undertaken for export and that the development gained momentum, reaching a peak in the late 1960's. By then it had become a major economic activity for the Ojibwa and in a number of communities produced an income in excess of any other economic activity. But there are indications from the available figures that commercial fishing has reached a plateau and leveled off. In some cases it even appears that there is a decrease in productivity. This appears to have occurred in spite of mercury contamination. Nevertheless, the time span is so short that it is not possible to know whether this is a long term trend or merely a minor fluctuation that might alter in the next few years.

Although production appears to have reached a plateau, income varies (Table 20). In the south, income is in general declining but in the north it has increased. In the latter case, this is apparently due to the higher prices now being paid for pickerel and whitefish and not due to any overall increase in production.

The actual number of individuals engaged in commercial fishing is most difficult to ascertain with any degree of validity. First, a distinction must be made between casual fishermen and those who fish with a high degree of consistency.

TABLE 20. Production and Income from Commercial Fishing by
Selected Areas, Northwestern Ontario: 1966 and 1970.

		<u>1966</u>		<u>1970</u>	
Osnaburgh	Income	\$	43,215	\$	17,263
	Pounds		164,518		76,160
Pikangikum	Income	\$	28,984	\$	44,780
	Pounds		133,453		125,964

Big Trout Lake

Income	\$	21,977	\$	28,992
Pounds		107,559		77,233

Round Lake

Income	\$	46,000	\$	92,000
Pounds		284,000		328,000

Lake of the Woods

Income	\$	256,597	\$	155,592
Pounds		1,515,326		1,055,630

Rainy Lake

Income	\$	56,650	\$	56,360
Pounds		384,269		508,108

In addition, there is the difficulty of determining if the same or different men exploit different fisheries. It appears that in the case of the Round Lake Ojibwa, the same men exploit different fisheries although these fisheries have been considered by the government as exploited by different fishermen. Table 21 presents what data are available for comparative purposes.

TABLE 21. The Numbers of Indian Fishermen in Certain Areas:
1970-1971

	Government Data	<u>Field Data</u>	
		<u>Casual</u>	<u>Steady</u>
Round Lake	163		20-30
Lake of the Woods (including Shoal Lake)	45	—	—
Shoal Lake	-	13-14	2 (Families)
Rainy Lake	4	—	2

Approximately 8,000 Ojibwa inhabit Northwestern Ontario. Within such a population there should be between 1,500 and 2,000 able-bodied males. Only about half (750 according to government figures) are involved in commercial fishing to one degree or another.

Table 21 is suggestive, although far from giving a wide picture of the situation regarding the numbers of fishermen involved. First the government figures may be too high. Round Lake is an extreme case. Nevertheless, for the whole of Northwestern Ontario, the total number of individuals involved to any degree in commercial fishing is probably only between 80% and 90% of the government figures. This is not serious but the distinction between casual fishermen and steady fishermen is of much greater magnitude. It is estimated that only between 10% and 15% of all men engaged in commercial fishing fish intensively. Accordingly, there are probably not more than 50 to 100 fishermen in all of Northwestern Ontario deeply involved. (Production figures also appear to be subject to some error).

It is obvious from the data given as to the number of fishermen involved that commercial fishing is not a source of income for all of those capable of employment. The figures indicate that a large number of men and some women do, at least sporadically, undertake to fish commercially. Nevertheless, only a few fish steadily and intensively at all times of the year when commercial fishing can be

undertaken. These are the individuals that catch the bulk of the fish and earn the greatest proportion of the total income. Furthermore, these individuals are the older members of the society. Few, if any, of the younger people are at present becoming deeply involved in commercial fishing. Variations in the degree of involvement in commercial fishing are easily possible since this is an activity that is individualistic or family oriented. Commercial fishing also fits quite well into the seasonal round of activities with some exceptions. In the southern part of the area during the summer and fall, opportunities exist for employment as guides and in certain restricted localities for harvesting wild rice. This is not the case among the Ojibwa in the northern part of Northwestern Ontario.

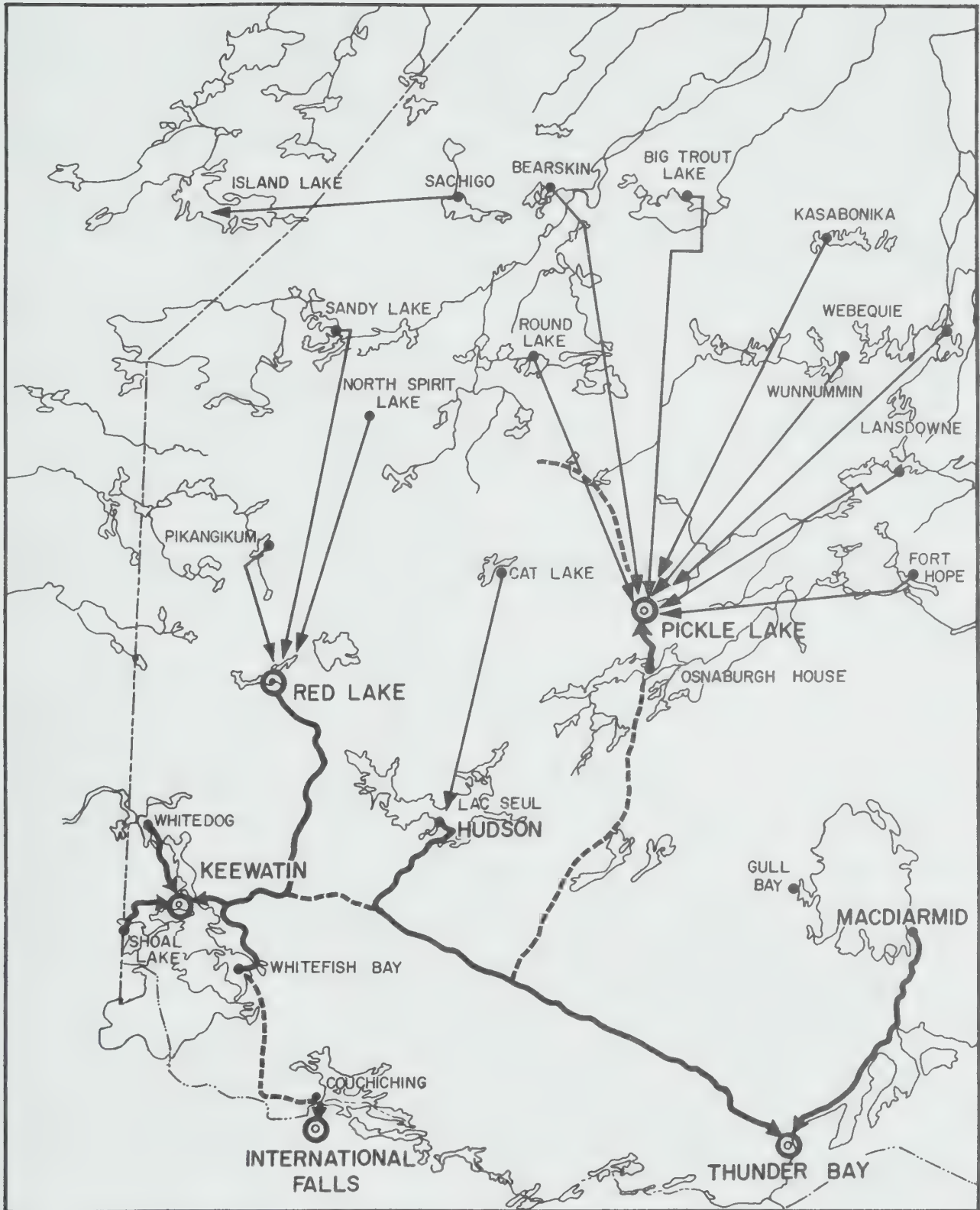
Those individuals who do fish steadily and intensively consider it a way of life that they have been accustomed to since childhood and accordingly would hate to have to give up this activity. Furthermore, they would be reluctant to transfer to another area even though the prospects for commercial fishing were better than at home. Some might be willing to move on a temporary and seasonal basis but always with the option of returning to their natal community.

There is, therefore, a deeply emotional commitment to commercial fishing on the part of some but no ritual involvement with fishing as there is with the gathering of wild rice. Nevertheless, the land and its resources are of deep emotional and religious significance to the Ojibwa and accordingly Treaty rights, in this case Treaty No. 3, are uppermost in their minds. This is an extremely sensitive area and no doubt to a large extent colours the feelings of the Ojibwa regarding regulations imposed upon them even though these same regulations relating to the utilization of natural resources are imposed upon other citizens.

Some, if not the majority, of the Ojibwa feel that the government has deliberately set about to eliminate the commercial fishermen in favour of the tourists. The Ojibwa are not alone in this sentiment. The Euro-Canadian commercial fishermen view this as a major threat to their existence. Accordingly, mercury contamination, it is believed, is yet another excuse to harass and eventually eliminate the commercial fisheries. The closing of the fish hatcheries, increasing of the legal size of fish and the mesh size of gill nets and Hydro projects are all other devices aimed at the elimination of or are at least detrimental to a productive and viable commercial fishery.

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is viewed with mixed feelings. Its short period of existence to date has not given the Ojibwa a thorough opportunity to arrive at an opinion on its functioning and whether or not they see it as beneficial or detrimental to their own interests. The Euro-Canadian commercial fishermen, on the other hand, feel that it should not be operating in the southern part of Northwestern Ontario as the sole buyer but rather just one among many. They do see it as advantageous to the fishermen in the northern part of the region. In this connection Map 5 indicates the problems faced in exporting fish from the various communities where commercial fishing is undertaken.

The Ojibwa feel that if commercial fishing must be closed in those areas where it is not viable or because of mercury contamination alternatives must be made available but within the communities themselves in order that the people may have work and not have to depend upon welfare. The latter is definitely not seen as a solution to any economic problem except in the case of those who are disabled and unable to work. Alternatives, however, must fit within the Ojibwa frame of reference. Because of this the Ojibwa (at least a part) feel strongly that they should have a much greater and effective say in what is to be done and how. The Indian position appears to be one in which discussion and acceptance of the validity of Ojibwa views should be recognized by the Euro-Canadian whereas the latter believe that the future is clearly indicated and that they already know the road to be taken. In this case, however, there are polar positions, one that maintains that commercial fishing should continue, whereas the other that the tourist industry will dominate the economic scene and that, therefore, commercial fishing will have to disappear.



MAP 5

EXPORT ROUTES FOR COMMERCIAL FISH 1970-71

PART V THOUGHTS AS TO THE FUTURE

Considering the existing circumstances and conditions prevailing in Northwestern Ontario emanating from developments within the area and from pressures from outside, the facts relating to commercial fishing among the Ojibwa seem quite clear. At present, few individuals from the total population are engaged in this activity and the ones that are, tend to be the older members of the society. Nevertheless, the commercial fisheries provide a limited, though very important, income to these families and to the communities. However, the productivity may well be on the decline and accordingly the income.

The decline in productivity is due in part to the closure of certain fisheries because of mercury contamination and, in some instances perhaps, to a decrease in demand in the world markets. Another contributing factor may be the over-exploitation of the fisheries resources in the past decade. A final factor involved is that the youth do not appear to be interested in learning this trade and in effect fewer fishermen are involved each year. Although the figures are imprecise, there appears to have been a decrease in the number of fishermen within each band.

For these reasons, the end of commercial fishing as a viable economic activity in Northwestern Ontario appears to be in sight. In its place are the tourists who are entering the area in greater numbers each year for recreation, often sports fishing. There is still, though, a possibility of a small but viable commercial fishery in the northern part of Northwestern Ontario although even here with the new roads and easy access by plane for the tourists, it may also be doomed. It would appear that given present conditions of schooling and other factors, it will not last too long even without the tourists.

But if the commercial fisheries disappear then what is to become of those Indians, even though few in number, who have relied upon it as a source of income. The alternative is relief, re-training or working for but not with the Euro-Canadian in the tourist industry. Relief is not necessarily the answer and is certainly not one that the Ojibwa feel is appropriate except under special circumstances. As far as re-training is concerned, the question can be legitimately asked: "Re-training for what? ". And finally, the fact that the Ojibwa almost always is relegated to the position of working for the Euro-Canadian rather than with him is of vital concern to the Indian people when they view their relationships with the Euro-Canadian society and the position they feel they should hold within this society. This is an exceedingly sensitive area but one which must be faced, given the values, attitudes and behavioural patterns exemplified in Ojibwa culture.

Commercial fishing, therefore, has to be viewed in the wider context of Ojibwa culture and the position that Northwestern Ontario holds within the Provincial setting. It is not solely a matter of what to do about commercial fishing but rather what alternatives and what future is there within Northwestern Ontario in terms of the values and attitudes held by citizens within the more affluent sections of Canadian society.

From this point of view additional considerations and factors must be recognized. These tend to be qualitative rather than quantitative features of life in Northwestern Ontario for the Ojibwa people. The factors involved are many. One is that in much of the area of Northwestern Ontario, the Ojibwa form the majority of the population, the Ojibwa portion increasing faster than any other ethnic group. In fact, it is doubling itself every twenty years. In other sections of Northwestern Ontario, although the Ojibwa are not in the majority, they constitute a sizeable percentage of the local population. Yet the decision-making process, the power and the authority reside in the hands of the Euro-Canadians. Furthermore, the Ojibwa

have a distinct cultural heritage unrelated in large measure to that of the Euro-Canadian and a partially distinct culture although modified in certain respects through contact with the dominant society. In addition, the Ojibwa enjoy special status under Treaty Nos. 3, 5, and 9. There are also many who are or consider themselves of Indian ancestry but who are not Treaty. They, at the present time, are emerging and voicing their discontent. Furthermore, the majority of the Ojibwa have a strong desire to remain where they are. They have a deep devotion to their land and what it supplies in the way of resources such as fishing, gathering and hunting. Because of this, there is a rising concern as to how they might best protect their rights to these resources as they see them under Treaty. A factor of fundamental importance is that the Ojibwa do not regard materialism as a goal to strive for. It is not that they do not appreciate security and basic well-being but they do not ordinarily wish to aspire beyond this level. This, in many ways, is an advantage within Northwestern Ontario where as yet the resource base is relatively limited thereby prohibiting indigenous economic development as is the case in certain other sections of Ontario. The lack of a desire to amass wealth is reflected in the Ojibwa work ethic which is not the "Protestant work ethic". One need only work sufficiently hard to acquire the basic essentials of life. Furthermore, in spite of the intensity of Euro-Canadian contact in the past several decades and in spite of the fact that the Ojibwa have lost much of their cultural heritage since the arrival of the first Europeans, they have retained a pride and a faith in the future. Not only have they retained this faith but they have made a suitable adaptation to a Subartic environment in such a manner that in the past survival was, as a rule, ensured. Today this adaptation remains although often unutilized to the full extent because of constrictions imposed from outside. At the same time, the Ojibwa have made a partial accommodation to Euro-Canadian society but an accommodation that often leads to their frustration, a result of the differing cultural values that exist in the two societies.

On the basis of what has been said above, the conditions seem clear but the solutions ephemeral. It is obvious that an economically viable system, which no doubt will need subsidy in part, must be established but within the framework of Ojibwa attitudes, thoughts and values. These must be accounted for and allowed expression if the economic system is to be meaningful to the Ojibwa and they are able to contribute to Euro-Canadian society. Such an economic system should include commercial fishing where possible. But it cannot be the sole basis of the economy. Rather, all other resource-based operations must be allowed to become established and operated in so far as possible by Ojibwa in co-operation with Euro-Canadians to form not an integrated but rather a complementary whole. It would seem logical to assume that the Ojibwa must and are able to work out a viable way of life within Northwestern Ontario. Not always would such a way of life be economical in Euro-Canadian terms but perhaps it would be in the eyes of the Ojibwa. If it is not possible to make an accommodation to the views and desires of the Ojibwa majority and they become further relegated to the margins of Euro-Canadian society, the result is a foregone conclusion. Apathy, demoralization and anti-social behavior will result. Such a situation has few or no outlets for escape except through violence. One need only review the events of the past ten to fifteen years to see such a turn of events taking place in the north in those communities where the disparity between Euro-Canadian and Indian is greatest.

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APPENDIX

COMMERCIAL FISHING ACTIVITIES of the WUNNUMMIN LAKE OJIBWA

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Royal Ontario Museum
November 30, 1971

Purpose: To examine commercial fishing activities at Wunnummin Lake with a view to assessing social and economic factors contributing to fisheries productivity.

Duration of Field Work: July 19-August 27, 1971.

Location: Wunnummin Lake is situated on the upper portion of the Winisk River, approximately one hundred and five miles north of Pickle Lake, Ontario.

Population: The village of Wunnummin Lake has a population of 197 Ojibwa Indians and one white.

Band Affiliation: All the residents of Wunnummin Lake belong to the Big Trout Lake Band.

History of Commercial Fishing: Commercial fishing at Wunnummin Lake started around 1934, when an airline from Armstrong started buying sturgeon at summer fishing camps. The first attempts to establish fisheries for less valuable species, namely pickerel and whitefish, were made around 1948. Two different airlines, one from Sioux Lookout and one from Pickle Lake, hired local Indians to supervise the fisheries and to construct ice houses and storage sheds. During the 1960's the Department of Indian Affairs attempted to make the fisheries more profitable by building more ice and storage installations, and by sending fishery advisers to the community.

Fish Prices: Through the efforts of Indian Affairs and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, which commenced operations in 1968, the prices paid for fish have risen sharply in the past ten years. About ten years ago the price received for pickerel was about \$.10 per lb. In the summer of 1971 the price received for pickerel was \$.35 per lb. Whitefish are still a low-priced species, bringing only \$.10 per lb.

Fishing Method: The fish are taken by means of nylon gill nets. Just as there are differences in the size of nets, so are there differences in the number of nets which are employed by individual fishermen. Of the twenty-five men involved in the

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Wunnummin Lake fishery during 1971, the majority (19) employed only one or two nets. The remaining six men fished more intensively, using from five to nine nets each.

Duration of Fishing Season: In the summer of 1971 commercial fishing activities commenced on July 12. At this time all twenty-five men were involved. During early August several men ceased fishing and by August 12, there were only eight men who continued to fish. This group of eight included the six men who were fishing with five or more nets.

Area of Exploitation: The centre of the commercial fishery is the packing house, which is situated in the village of Wunnummin Lake. This is the place where the individual fishermen bring their catch, where it is recorded and packed in ice by the fish packer. Those men who fish with only one or two nets limit their activities to an area which extends no more than five miles from the village in any direction. Those who fish more intensively usually set their nets in less crowded fishing areas which are from five to fifteen miles distant from the village.

Local Transportation: Fishing nets are tended and fish transported to the packing house by means of 17' and 18' canvas-covered canoes propelled by outboard motors. The majority of fishermen use motors of approximately 5 H.P. which yield approximately 10-12 m.p.g. of gas and which enable them to travel at an average speed of about 12 m.p.h. The local price of outboard gas during the summer of 1971 was \$1.55 per gallon.

Productivity: The effectiveness of gill nets that are set relatively close to the water surface (as are those in the Wunnummin Lake area) varies greatly according to season. Productivity tends to be greater during the periods of cold water following break-up and preceeding freeze-up, when pickerel and whitefish range close to the surface. During the warmest part of the summer the fish retreat to deep cold water, and yield from gill nets falls off sharply. During the early part of 1971 commercial fishing, which started on July 12, the daily yield from an average-sized net was about 20 lbs. However, by August 12 productivity had declined to about 25% of this figure.

Cash Income: Although the quantity of a fisherman's catch is related to the number of nets which he sets, it does not necessarily follow that an increase in the number of nets will result in a corresponding increase in his cash income. An increase in the number of nets usually requires the fisherman to cover greater distances. This not only makes greater demands on his time, but increases overhead costs by increasing fuel consumption.

In order to illustrate the manner in which cash income is related to effort expended, the incomes of three Wunnummin Lake fishermen are calculated on an hourly basis. The hourly income at the beginning of the season is contrasted with that on August 12.

Fisherman A.: Fisherman A. has 9 nets; more than any of the others in the Wunnummin Lake area. The centre of his fishing area is approximately 12 miles from the packing shed, and the distance travelled within the fishing area about 12 miles. Thus, he is required to cover about 36 miles to tend his nets, which takes about 3 hours out of an 8-hour day and costs about \$5.00 in gas and oil consumption. On July 12 he caught 120 pounds of pickerel and 60 pounds of whitefish for which he received about \$48.00. His cash income after subtracting \$5.00 for fuel consumption, was approximately \$5.40 per hour. On August 12 he caught only 18 pounds of pickerel and 9 pounds of whitefish. Thus the value of his catch had fallen to about \$12.00. Although it took less time to empty his nets, he still had to work about six hours to make \$7.00 profit, which represents only about \$1.20 per hour.

Fisherman B.: Fisherman B has only 5 nets, which he sets about six miles from the village. During the time of good fishing he checks his nets twice a day, which takes a total of about five hours and costs about \$3.00 in gas consumption. On July 12 this man was catching about 65 pounds of pickerel and 35 pounds of whitefish per day. Thus, his daily profit was about \$23.25 (\$26.25-\$3.00), representing an hourly wage of about \$4.65. On August 12, when his daily catch was worth only \$6.00 he checked his nets only once per day, thus cutting his time and fuel consumption by half. At this time his daily profit was about \$4.50, representing an hourly wage of about \$1.80.

Fisherman C.: This individual has only one net, which he sets about 2-1/2 miles from the village. On July 12 he caught about 14 pounds of pickerel and 6 pounds of whitefish for which he received \$5.50. Since his gas consumption was about \$1.50 per day, his daily profit was about \$4.00. He usually required little more than an hour from the time he left the village until he returned, and therefore made about \$4.00 per hour. When the value of his daily catch fell to \$1.25 on August 10, he ceased fishing. Since the value of his catch was exceeded by the value of the gas he consumed, he would have lost money had he continued to fish after this date.

Conclusion: The three cases which have been described above suggest why some fishermen stopped fishing after only three or four weeks. It appears that those men who fish with only one or two nets are able to make wages which are acceptable to them only during the highly productive part of the season. When productivity declines during the hottest part of the summer, these small-scale fishermen are sometimes unable to make enough to cover the cost of gas for their boat.

This observation leads one to wonder why more of the small-scale fishermen do not increase both their wages and the length of time during which they can profitably fish by increasing the number of their nets. It would appear that one of the main deterrent factors is the time and expense involved in transportation. Since the neighbourhood of the village is heavily fished, both by subsistence and small-scale commercial fishermen, and since it is unprofitable to set a net in too close proximity to others, those men who wish to set several nets have to travel a considerable distance from the village in order to do so. As the examples have indicated, the time and effort imposed by this extra distance can be so considerable, that the man who fishes reasonably close to the village with five nets can sometimes make a greater hourly wage than one who finishes with almost twice as many nets, but who has to travel a much greater distance.

Since the time and expense involved in transportation have such a considerable influence on the fisherman's profits, the economic feasibility of commercial fishing depends to a large extent on the distances which need to be covered. One attempt to reduce the amount of travelling was made by three of the Wunnummin Lake fishermen who set up a camp near their fish nets and only returned to the village every 2 or 3 days. The reason that more men did not cut their expenses in this manner may be related to the fact that the increase in profits would not adequately compensate them for the greater inconvenience of camp life as opposed to living at home in the village.



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